

THE ROLE OF WOMEN
IN MINISTRY

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ABSTRACT

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The context is Kettering Seventh-day Adventist Church in Dayton, Ohio, which is secondary to the Church, in North Regional Conference of Madagascar, where I serve as pastor. My hypothesis states that if women in leadership are provided with a workshop that brings awareness by offering a biblical and theological foundation for empowering them then they will be able articulate their beliefs, be equipped with information that will strengthen them in their faith and empower them to articulate it to themselves and others. I will use pre- and post-surveys, observations, and interviews to prove my hypothesis.

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have empowered me beyond my utmost inspiration. Thank you for the tremendous amount of time expensed in helping me identify what should be the topic of my project starting from the spiritual autobiography, guiding me as I wrote each chapter of my dissertation, and in the development of my doctoral project.

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DEDICATION

Great is the Lord! He is most worthy of praise! No one can measure his greatness!! My heart is flooded with horrendous gladness!! You have offered all I need!! You blessed me with this milestone!!

First, I dedicate this to my dad and mom, who were ministers for the Seventh-day Adventist Church for forty years. My parents dreamed of receiving a doctorate in ministry one day but did not make it because of time and illness. Instead, my parents struggled to educate me, their son, to become a minister with a doctorate degree one day. How I miss you so, mom and dad! You showed me how Christ cared for us through all the struggles we had to endure in ministry, which I was part of. I am so sorry that both of you are no longer here to see me finish my doctorate in ministry, which you told me to achieve. You spent time praying about it and investing all your financial resources. Here it is, mom and dad. I offer you this degree in memory of your love for me and your ministry to our family and the entire church that you served.

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INTRODUCTION

In chapter one, the ministry project is introduced. The title of this ministry project is “The Role of Women in Ministry.” The context of this project is Kettering Seventh-day Adventist Church in Dayton, Ohio, which is secondary to the Seventh-day Adventist Church, North Regional Conference of Madagascar, where I serve as pastor. Madagascar is an island country located off the southeastern coast of Africa. These two churches have different positions about the role of women in ministry. The Seventh-day Adventist Church in the North Regional Conference of Madagascar does not accept women in ministry, and the Kettering Seventh-day Adventist Church welcomes women in ministry, though both congregations are Seventh-day Adventist churches. However, the problem in my local context of Dayton, Ohio, is that many members lack awareness of the theological and biblical foundations that support women in ministry. The hypothesis is: If women in leadership (ministry) are provided with a workshop that brings awareness by offering a biblical and theological foundation then they will be empowered in their leadership, which will create avenues for them to articulate their beliefs, will equip them with information, strengthen them in their faith, and empower them to articulate that faith to themselves and others. The use of pre- and post-surveys, observations, and interviews will affirm the hypothesis.

In chapter two, the history of women in ministry throughout the Bible is being discussed. The biblical passage, Romans 16:1-7, is examined to determine what should

be the role of women in ministry. Throughout the Bible and within the church the role of women in ministry was an issue. The Bible is silent regarding the role of women in ministry. At the same time, a few women in the Bible have involvement in ministry. This project focuses on the role of women in ministry, and while exploring Romans 16:1–7 in textual and biblical contexts, clearly the text limits women's roles regarding ministry. Paul's statement in 1 Corinthians 14:34 says: "Let your women keep silent in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience as also saith the law." Based on a biblical interpretation, this was well-respected. None of these women found in Romans 16:1–7 spoke from a church pulpit but had a ministry which surpasses the ministry of those who were preaching from the pulpit during the first church and today.

Chapter three discusses the question, can a woman to be an ordained minister (pastor) or take the lead in a local church? There is a divergence of opinion between Christians when responding to this question. All use the Bible as the source of their convictions. One cannot consider the ministry of women apart from the overall purpose of the church, but today the purpose of the church is tricky. This causes many things to go in the wrong way regarding the mission of the church. Accurately understanding and bringing a positive conclusion concerning the role of women in ministry demands a careful examination of the historical settings and historical opinions that induced what the writers said in the Bible concerning the role of women in ministry. Chapter three also focuses on the historical background of the New Testament and discusses the historical position of the church regarding the role of women in ministry. This effort focuses on Romans 16:1-7 and 1 Timothy 2:8-15 as evidenced in the next few chapters.

Chapter four discusses various theological disciplines studied on the issue of the role of women. These disciplines brought great ideas concerning this issue. Chapter four explores what should be the role of women in ministry using Womanist Theology as an instrument of examination. One source defines the term by stating that Womanist Theology is a religious conceptual framework which reconsiders and revises the traditions, practices, scriptures, and biblical interpretation with a special lens to empower and liberate African American women in America. Womanist Theology uses Mark 11:28 to answer the question of which authority empowers the layperson. Chapter four then provides an analysis of this view, and this view leads to a discussion of Womanist Theology's various views of Christian temperament in the nineteenth century using African American women's narratives.

Chapter five discusses the role of women in ministry in relation to other disciplines. The church and other disciplines continue to discuss what should be the role of women in ministry. A discipline called appreciative inquiry through its branch named appreciative leadership provides some insight into what the role of women in ministry in the twenty-first century should be. Appreciative leadership is unique among leadership theories – both past and present. This uniqueness includes its strength-based practice of searching for the positive in people and organizations, and the role this plays in organizational innovation and transformation. Chapter five also discusses appreciative leadership, the role of an appreciative leader, the five core strategies of appreciative leadership, leadership styles in contrast to appreciative leadership, how appreciative leadership helps women, as well as the relationship between appreciative leadership and employee's well-being in everyday working life.

Chapter six is the report on the implementation of the project through a workshop.

The influence for this ministry project comes from a long family experience that has become a center of interest in my ministry. I believe that God gave me the mission to study more about the role of women in ministry to establish a clear view about it, to help my local conference (the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the North Regional Conference of Madagascar) and my entire church. This is not an easy task because I first had to study the role of women in ministry in the American context, understand it, and then make a comparison between the American context and the context of my local conference. The Book of Romans 16:1-7 enlightens my doctoral project about the role of women in ministry. There were several women who were involved in church leadership in Romans 16:1-7. All of them were prominent during the first church era and one of them, Junia, seems to be an apostle. Studying them has helped me have a better view about what the role of women in ministry should be and will help develop my own view about the role of women in ministry. My local church, the whole Seventh-day Adventist Church, and the entire Christian world can benefit from this study.

CHAPTER ONE

MINISTRY FOCUS

Recently, persons raised questions about the role of women in ministry. Many theologians, lay church members (congregation), and church leaders try to come up with ideas about the role of women in ministry. The more they investigate the matter, the more they become confused on the matter. For many years, the role of women in ministry has been a source of debate and it has also been a source of division within certain churches. Increasing diverse operating contexts along with the quest for improved ideas on this matter resulted in persons not basing their speculations on the Bible but basing their speculation mostly on human cultures.

For instance, the churches on the western part of the world value women in ministry, while the church in the southern and eastern part of the world does not accept women in ministry. Within church congregations, women that are really devoted with the work of God (in ministry) exist, but others typically undermine them as they question women's place in ministry. This synergy is a companion to the biblical guide designed to help understand and draw a common conclusion regarding the role of women in ministry. The primary intent is to help the local church's congregation understand the role of women in ministry. Considering all these facts, the aim of my project is to study the role of women in ministry and how we should apply it in today's church. My goal is to create

a bridge that will unite the global church on the subject of the role of women in ministry.

Robert L. Saucy says:

The confusion over this issue in the church today makes the questions of women students completely understandable. On the one hand, some assert that there are no gender distinctions whatsoever in the roles of men and women in the church. Both can serve in the same functions and offices with no restrictions. On the other hand, we find churches where the ministry of women is stringently limited, particularly in the teaching and leadership roles. The focus on the scripture that restrict them from certain functions. In many instances, women feel as if they have less voice in their church than in any other area of their lives, including their Christian family.¹

Some assessments will focus on classifying the role of women in ministry, and this assessment will help survey personal judgements on the role of women in ministry. This project will complete a broader analysis about the role of women in ministry. My synergy, especially as I watched my parents being treated unequally by the church, leans me toward a ministry project that will bring an awareness to both laity, clergy, and lay members of the church to help them understand the root causes and the history of the role of women in ministry, and at the end they will be able to understand the role of women in ministry in today's context.

Context

In the history of the church and throughout the Bible, the role of women in ministry was an issue. History reveals that women sporadically played sympathetic roles in serving the church and found glee and a sense of achievement from being wives and mothers. The Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church in the United States of America, particularly Kettering Seventh-day Adventist Church (located at 3939 Stonebridge Road,

¹ Robert Saucy and Judith TenElshof, eds., *Women and Men in Ministry: A Complementary Perspective* (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2001), 14.

Dayton, Ohio) where I now attend as compared to the Seventh-day Adventist Church of the north region of Madagascar where I pastored for several years, was the focus of the context analysis.

Ohio is a Midwestern U.S. state—one of the fifty states of the United States of America. Ohio is the seventh most populous and the tenth most densely populated. Ohio was called the Mother of Modern Presidents. The one and only Presidential Exhibition Hall, in Hartsgrove, Ohio, credits John Hanson and eight others who were chosen and served one-year terms before the writing of the Constitution. John Hanson, theoretically, was the first president of the United States. Ohio is the birthplace of seven U.S. presidents: Ulysses S. Grant, Rutherford B. Hayes, James Garfield, Benjamin Harrison, William McKinley, William H. Taft, and Warren G. Harding. U.S. currency portrays two presidents from Ohio—Grant and McKinley—which one would agree is a big deal.²

Dayton is the hometown of aviation. The Wright Brothers invented the first airplane in Dayton on December 17, 1903.³ Although the Wright Brothers invented the first successful airplane, others made many prior unsuccessful attempts. It took the aviation industry several years to make a successful airplane.

Dayton is the sixth most populous city in the state of Ohio. According to recent estimates, the population of Dayton is 140,599. Based on a survey conducted in 2016, there are 68,691 males (48.9%) and 71,787 females (51.1%), and the females have more influence because they constitute a majority of the population. One also sees this at

² Douglas J. Berry, “Ten Interesting Facts about Ohio,” BarryStaff, <https://www.barrystaff.com/10-interesting-facts-about-ohio/>.

³ Smithsonian National and Air Space Museum, “Inventing Flying Machine, Wright Brothers: The Invention of the Aerial Age,” Smithsonian National and Air Space Museum, <https://airandspace.si.edu/exhibitions/wright-brothers/online/fly/1903/>.

church, where more females than males attend. At the Kettering Seventh-day Adventist Church, more females than males attend.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church of the north region of Madagascar is located in Mahajanga, Madagascar. Mahajanga is the capital city of the Boeny region in the north of Madagascar. In 2013, according to a survey, the population of Mahajanga was 220,629. Mahajanga is a seaport—the second most important one in Madagascar after Toamasina. Mahajanga is a favorite tourist destination for local (Malagasy) tourists and international travelers. As in other African cities, the percentage of females is higher than the percentage of males in Mahajanga. Unlike Dayton, the male population does have more influence than the female population. As in the Kettering SDA Church, there are more women than men who attend the church in Madagascar.

The state of Ohio has several issues. The first is the drug and criminal justice policies initiative that is currently under consideration. A “yes” vote supports this constitutional modification to make offenses related to drug possession and drug use no more than misdemeanors. A “no” vote opposes this constitutional modification.⁴ There are several homicides in Ohio, the most recent occurring on June 6, 2019, at 40 West Welch Avenue, Apt C, at 12:32 a.m. in Columbus. The victims included a Black fifteen-year-old female and a fourteen-year-old Black male. The suspected killer is still unknown. This is the forty-ninth homicide in Columbus in 2019.⁵

The Ohio office of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued a recall of Kroger brand frozen berries over possible Hepatitis A contamination. On June 7, 2019,

⁴ Ballotpedia, “Ohio Issue 1, Drug and Criminal Justice Policies Initiative 2018,” Ballotpedia, [https://ballotpedia.org/Ohio_Issue_1,_Drug_and_Criminal_Justice_Policies_Initiative_\(2018\)](https://ballotpedia.org/Ohio_Issue_1,_Drug_and_Criminal_Justice_Policies_Initiative_(2018)).

⁵ Sunny 95, “Fifteen-Year-Old Girl Killed in Overnight Shooting,” Sunny 95, <https://sunny95.com/news/061160-15-year-old-girl-killed-in-overnight-shooting/>.

the FDA recommended that customers not consume and instead toss out fruits packaged under Kroger's Private Selection brand.⁶

According to the American Community Survey's (ACS) one-year survey, Dayton's median household income was \$52,745 in 2017—the newest statistic available. Dayton's median household income is \$1,276 lower than the median Ohio household income and \$7,591 less than the U.S. median household income.⁷ Over one-quarter of the population is between the ages of twenty-five and forty-four, while another one-quarter is between the ages of forty-five to fifty-four. About 23% are under eighteen, while 11.8% are at least sixty-five. More females (51.3%) than males make up the total population.⁸

The top employer in the Dayton area is Premier Health Partners, which employs over 14,000 people. Other top employers are Montgomery County, Sinclair Community College, Dayton Public Schools, and the University of Dayton. According to the most recent ACS, the racial composition of Dayton was:

1. White: 55.41%
2. Black or African American: 39.31%
3. Two or more races: 3.36%
4. Asian: 0.93%
5. Other race: 0.63%
6. Native American: 0.32%
7. Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander: 0.04%⁹

⁶ WJHG, "FDA Issue Recall of Kroger Brand Frozen Berries over Possible Hepatitis A Contamination," WJHG, <https://www.wjhg.com/content/news/FDA-issues-recall-of-Kroger-brand-frozen-berries-over-possible-Hepatitis-A-contamination-511029062.html>.

⁷ Department of Numbers, "Census ACS, Dayton Ohio Household Income," Department of Numbers, <https://www.deptofnumbers.com/income/ohio/dayton/>.

⁸ World Population Review, "Dayton Population Age and Labor Statistic," World Population Review, worldpopulationreview.com/us-cities/Dayton-population.

⁹ World Population Review, "ACS Dayton Demographics," World Population Review, worldpopulationreview.com/us-cities/Dayton-population.

Of Dayton residents twenty-five years of age or older, 83.0% have a high school or higher education and 17.7% have a bachelor's degree or higher. This is based on a study conducted from 2013 to 2017.¹⁰ Dayton is a city in southwestern Ohio. The area is home to the National Museum of the U.S. Air Force with a vast collection of aircraft from early 1900s to a space shuttle exhibit. Carillon Historical Park contains a Wright Brothers plane, nineteenth-century buildings, and antique trains. The Boonshoft Museum of Discovery has kids' science exhibits and a small zoo. International fine art is on display at the Dayton Art Institute.

The Kettering SDA Church is located in a suburban community, where most of the inhabitants are White. We do not hear of a lot of crime occurring in the surrounding area, although persons very often report crimes in the city of Dayton. The Kettering Health Network, owned by the Seventh-day Adventist Church and located near the church, is a big hospital—one of the biggest in Dayton. The area surrounding the church is always clean. Many of the workers from the Kettering Health Care Network worship at the Kettering SDA Church including physicians, nurses, lab technicians, etc. They are among the leaders of the church. Some patients of Kettering Hospital also attend Kettering SDA Church.

The Kettering SDA Church offers two services on the Sabbath (Saturday). The first service starts at 10:00 a.m. and the second service starts at 11:00 a.m. The first service is for the youth, and the second service is for the adults. The attendants in the Kettering church are multiracial, although most are White because it is a White church. Females make up a larger number in attendance at both services.

¹⁰ United States Census Bureau, "Quick Facts Dayton Ohio," United States Census Bureau, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/daytoncityohio/PST045218>.

The province of Mahajanga has several issues. First and most well-known is the measles outbreak throughout the province. From October 4, 2018 to January 7, 2019, the Ministry of Public Health of Madagascar reported 19,539 measles cases and thirty-nine “facility-based” deaths (case fatality 0.2%). In this current epidemic, children aged one to fourteen years old account for 64% of the total number of cases. The age distribution in this group is as follows: under five years constitute 35%, five to nine years constitute 22%, and ten to fourteen years constitute 19% of the cases. Both sexes are equally affected, with a male-to-female ratio of 1.04.¹¹

Mahajanga is a warm state with beautiful beaches, lots of tourists, and an ancient heritage. There is a big baobab tree by the coast of Mahajanga believed to exist there since before the era of slavery. Some native Africans of Mahajanga worship this tree and say their ancestors brought the tree and planted it. The tree kept them safe while persons enslaved and traded them to other continents such as Asia and America.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church of the northern region of Madagascar (Mahajanga) is located on the Avenue de l’indépendance—a hot neighborhood where people are very mobile. On a day-to-day basis, persons report many crimes such as robberies, assaults, and rapes in the community where the church is located. Foreigners dominate the church because the natives of Mahajanga (Sakalava) do not believe in God because they are animists who worship trees and animals.

Talking of God or Christianity with the natives of Mahajanga is difficult. They are also male oriented in the sense that for them man has more value than woman, and a woman’s opinion is of little value. Even the church reflects this. Men do most of the work

¹¹ Relief Web, “World Health Organization, Measles Madagascar: Disease Outbreak News,” Relief Web, <https://reliefweb.int/report/madagascar/measles-madagascar-disease-outbreak-news-17-january-2019>.

at church except cleaning the church and collecting offerings. Over the last fifteen years some things changed in this regard, but those who still keep the old tradition of putting woman below man still exist.

Most of the population of Mahajanga lives below poverty. The average daily wage is below one dollar per day. The people of Mahajanga struggle to make ends meet. The natives of Mahajanga are called Sakalava. Sakalava are of East African descent—mixed with Arabs and Indonesians. Some believe that the ancestors of Sakalava immigrated to Mahajanga before 1400 when slavery started. Actually, the African descendants of Mahajanga were slaves taken from Tanzania and Mozambique. The Arabs were slave traders, and the Indonesians were colonizers. In time, both groups intermixed and became one race called Sakalava.

These three cultures that combined to form the Sakalava kept a strong African and Arab tradition of looking at a woman as property that a man obtains when he fulfills some requirements stipulated by the father of the woman. The man pays a bride price to the father or the family of a woman. Once the father of the woman receives the payment, the woman becomes the property of the man. This culture is still strong in most homes of the Sakalava, and this is why it is difficult to address gender equality in the church.

The city of Mahajanga used to be a big slave market. There are many reminders of slavery and the sufferings caused by slavery in the minds of the natives of Mahajanga (Sakalava). To overcome these bad memories, the Sakalava do not want to get rid of the traditions their ancestors taught. I am a Sakalava. My father is a Sakalava of African descent, and my mother is a Sakalava of Arab descent. When I go to meet my relatives, they do not allow my wife to sit next to me; she must sit on the floor and not on a chair.

She is not allowed to talk during the family reunion, and she must be in the kitchen preparing food most of the time. She has to wear a dress that covers all of her body, and she has to kneel when she serves food to men. This is the picture of how women are treated in the Sakalava culture, and it has a big impact on the role of women in ministry in the SDA Church in the northern region of Madagascar.

As in most African cities, there are schools and a university in Mahajanga. These schools are elementary and high schools. Instructors teach several subjects at the University of Mahajanga. Nevertheless, most of the population remains uneducated because the culture of Sakalava does not promote education. Some of the Sakalava still adhere to the tradition that women should not go to school.

There are several interesting facts about Mahajanga. The first and probably the most popular is the cirque rouge. Cirque rouge is a mixture of different colored rocks and sand layers used by local artists in their sand-filled bottle art. This place is a lovely quiet place to visit.¹² According to geologists, Noah's flood, found in the Bible, created the colored rocks and sand layers. One finds a sight similar to cirque rouge in the Grand Canyon. Another interesting fact is the Ankarafantsika National Park. Ankarafantsika has several wild animals and wild landscapes. Ankarafantsika is a beautiful park with good accommodations, where you can see and observe lemurs as they pass near you and play with you.¹³

Looking at the issue of women in ministry today, two issues make the role of women in ministry confusing for the church. These issues are being conservative to the

¹² Louloua Asgaraly, "Cirque Rouge Mahajanga," Pixels, <https://pixels.com/featured/cirque-rouge-mahajanga-louloua-asgaraly.html>.

¹³ Madagascar Magazine, "Tanalohorizon, Ankarafantsika National Park," Madagascar Magazine, <https://www.madamagazine.com/en/ankarafantsika-national-park/>.

point of not accepting new truth and being liberal to the point of accepting all the supposed new truth. Scholars and theologians failed to come to an agreement or to build a bridge that can unite the conservative and the liberal on the issue of the role of women in ministry today. Tradition and culture continue to dominate the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Madagascar. Exposing Kettering SDA Church to new truth and that way of thinking made it possible for them to adopt a liberal way of thinking and adopt a new view about the role of women in ministry.

There is no doubt that the big differences between the church in Kettering and the church in Madagascar (Mahajanga) exist regarding the role of women in ministry. When I arrived at the Kettering church, a female pastor welcomed me, and I later saw that pastor performing baptism and duties like any other pastor. Such things cannot happen in the church in Madagascar. In the culture, tradition, and customs of the church in Madagascar, a man would always welcome a guest. Also, the role of women in ministry would be limited, and a female pastor would never perform baptism and duties like any other pastor.

Both churches do respect women. This is on the basis that in both churches more women than men attend church and outside church activities. The churches differ in how they consider the value of women regarding ministry. Kettering Seventh-day Adventist Church integrated women into their ministry leadership. On the other hand, the Seventh-day Adventist Church of the northern region of Madagascar lacks women in their ministry. Concerning ordination, I cannot say anything about it now for both churches. I still must investigate and study it. The fact that there was a female pastor who performed baptism at Kettering Seventh-day Adventist Church, reveals that there are yet some steps,

which I do not know, that the SDA in the United States took regarding the ministry of female pastors.

In the Seventh-day Adventist Church only an ordained minister or a commissioned minister has the credentials to perform baptism. Ordained elders and non-ordained ministers can perform baptism only in the absence of an ordained minister if an emergency baptism must take place. An ordained minister can delegate an ordained elder or non-ordained minister in this case. The ordained minister must have permission from the conference before allowing the ordained elder or the non-ordained minister to perform the baptism. I do not know if the female pastor who performed baptism at Kettering Seventh-day Adventist Church was an ordained elder or an ordained minister or commissioned minister who had the credentials, but she had one of the qualifications to perform a baptism. Here is a statement from the Seventh-day Adventist Church manual concerning the status of commissioned and ordained ministers:

God's work is to be jealously safeguarded by responsible leaders from the local church to the General Conference. Official credentials and licenses are issued to all authorized full-time Church employees and are granted by controlling committees for limited periods. In a local conference, the committee confers authority upon individuals to represent the Church as pastors and gospel workers. This authority is represented by the granting of credentials and licenses, which are written commissions, properly dated and signed by the officers of the conference. The authority thus conveyed is not personal or inherent in the individual but is inherent in the granting body, which may recall the credentials for cause at any time. Credentials and licenses granted employees are not their personal property and must be returned when employment is terminated or at the request of the organization that issued them. No one should be allowed to speak to any congregation unless he/she has been invited by the church in harmony with guidelines given by the conference. It is recognized, however, that there are times when congregations may be addressed by government officials or civic leaders; but all unauthorized persons shall not be given access to the pulpit. (See pp. 118–121.) Expired Credentials and Licenses—Credentials and licenses are granted for the duration of the term as provided for by the conference.¹⁴

¹⁴ Thomas Nelson, "Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual," Adventist.org, cc.adventist.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Seventh-day-adventist-church-manual_2015_updated.pdf.

On the other hand, the Seventh-day Adventist Federation of the northern region of Madagascar does not accept a female ordained elder to perform baptism. There are a few female ordained elders, but not one of them was delegated to perform baptism. Although the views about the role of women in ministry between Kettering Seventh-day Adventist Church and the church in Madagascar (Mahajanga) differ, one can see a few similarities. For instance, there are female deaconesses and elders, and women who take part in the church committees in both churches. That means there are women on the church boards of both churches. I am not aware of the identities of these roles and duties, but it looks like the women on the church board of Kettering have more say than those in Madagascar. This is because Kettering Seventh-day Adventist Church values women more, and I am sure that the church board values them and that they have a voice during church committees. On the other hand, I am sure that although there are a few women on the church board of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Madagascar, they are not allowed to speak much. The important points of view and the important decisions on matters only belong to men.

There is also a problem about accepting new truth and adapting that truth to the life of the church. Changes take time to become a custom. Actually, the changed role of women in ministry is a new truth. The present church discovered this truth, but the present church struggles to make it a custom for the worldwide church. In today's church, there is a lot of discussion and a lot of confusion regarding the role of women in ministry. This confusion tends to split the church. New theology seems to arise from these confusions. Starting with the rise of postmodernist thinking, many theologians, lay members, ministers, and church leaders started to raise questions about the role of women

in ministry. The new truth is welcomed in Kettering because church members were exposed to a liberal way of living, and they accept new truth easily. On the other hand, the church members in Madagascar are very conservative and want to cling to old traditions because their culture does not accept new truth easily.

Ministry Journey

My parents raised me in a conservative Christian home where it was clear from my childhood that women are not allowed to take part in ministry. The reason for this was mostly based on biblical tradition and local culture of the town where I grew up during my childhood. My dad was an Adventist pastor, and my mum was a Bible teacher. They married at a small theological seminary in Antananarivo, Madagascar. Something that I failed to understand was that there were many female students in the seminary where my mum and my dad met, but they were not accepted in ministry after their seminary training. My parents had five children including two boys and three girls. We could also sense the influence of male domination in our family.

My parents, especially my dad, considered his sons more than his daughters when it came to the matters of the church. Although they loved all their children and strived to give them a Christian education, some gaps still existed that one could observe them when my dad wanted us to perform some church duties. For instance, my dad will never tell his daughters to help him arrange or clean the pulpit area of the church when he wants it to be clean or arranged in a certain way. He also failed to encourage his daughters to get ministerial training or enter the seminary. Growing up with these ideas made me think that women should not be involved in any form of church activities. With

time and experience and from place to place, I started to see women's involvement in the church, and this brought some questions to my mind.

I encountered both good and bad experiences because of my upbringing. In numerous ways a spiritual tension between my giftedness and my sorrow in the face of it demarcated my life. I had a caring and compassionate family of origin, and I received a good education and did well at school. I was born in Antananarivo, Madagascar on April 25, 1980. I grew up there and at the age of thirteen my parents took me with them when they traveled across Africa. My dad used to tell me that he wanted a son and he prayed to God for several years that he may have a son. He promised God that if he received a son, he would dedicate his son to God's service (meaning becoming a pastor). I asked him later "why did you not promise God that you will also dedicate your daughter to do God's work? Can they not also do God's work?" He never replied to this question. He just said men are better in doing God's work than women and we stopped there. When I was growing up, I never had the thoughts of becoming a pastor or serving God in any capacity. I was a spoiled kid; although I did not have lots of toys because my parents did not have the means to buy them. I was very dynamic with church activities. My school and our house were always by the church because my dad was a conference president and a conference president resided on the premises of the church. The school belonged to conservative Seventh-day Adventists.

At some point I asked my parents why we are always living close to the church and why my school is always close to our house. My parents tried to escape my question by telling me that, "God loves us so much and he does not want us to be far from him!!! That is why we always live by the church." I was happy with that answer, and I shared

that with my friends. Being close to church shaped my Christianity and uplifted my faith in God and my spirituality. During that time, I was too religious and looking at me one can say that I was a small pastor. I was nicknamed Small Pastor because I was too religious. The Bible and church doctrines were the standard of education that my parents offered us.

Being a son of a pastor and having seen the difference between the life of a local pastor and a high-ranking pastor as well as the gap between men and women in ministry, I said that there are some things that need fixing in the church. The local pastors do most of the work for the church, but they are the ones that are not paid well. On the other hand, high-ranking pastors spend time traveling all over the world, get paid well, and have good lives but do not work much. I also started to question the views about the role of women in ministry and wanted to study more about it. During this time, I kept asking my dad about the different lifestyles between local pastors in the church and the high-ranking pastor and he told me that there is also a blessing upon each pastor. He told me that one should not question the blessings that God gives to God's servant. I kept quiet, but I did not agree with his answer. For me this was not a question of being blessed, but it was a question of management.

Furthermore, there was also a problem of gender equality that I observed in the church. Everyone in the church knew about this issue, but no one spoke about it. I remember that there was a lady who wanted to dedicate her life to doing God's work or to become a pastor but the conference where my dad worked did not allow her to enter ministry. It saddened her to hear that she could not enter ministry. From that time, I wondered about the real reason for her rejection from being a part of ministry.

Being a son of a minister, who my parents raised in different ministry levels in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, and as minister I always asked myself about the role of women in ministry. As I grew up, I observed that there were gaps between men and women regarding ministry. As I mentioned in the first paragraph my parents got married at a small theological seminary in Antananarivo, Madagascar. My mum and my dad got the same ministerial training, but my dad became a minister and occupied several leadership positions in the Seventh-day Adventist Church while my mum remained a Bible teacher for her entire ministerial career. Living in a home where persons clearly saw the ministerial gap between men and women, I always wanted to find out the reason for this and how can we find a solution that will put men and women on the same level in ministry. Observing my mum and my dad doing ministry duties convinced me that my mum was more devoted in her ministry than my dad in his.

My dad owed 90% of his success in ministry to my mum because of her work either at home or in the church. My mum arranged my dad's sermon, welcomed people very well at church or at home, and made a path for good leadership in the church. This made my dad have a positive impact on the church and he got lots of promotions in the church. At home my mum was the one who nurtured us spiritually. If not for her, I believe that I would have left the church by now.

An alliance statement on women in ministry states the following: "Women may fulfill any function in the local church which the senior pastor and elders may choose to delegate to them consistent with the Uniform Policy for Accredited Churches and may properly engage in any kind of ministry except that which involves elder authority."¹⁵

¹⁵ Terry Smith, "Women in Ministry," The Christian and Missionary Alliance, May 2018, <https://www.cmalliance.org/about/beliefs/perspectives/women-in-ministry>.

Obviously, the above explanation means that churches today face profound challenges that they cannot ignore. This is because of its continued reaction to the Enlightenment and modern scientific approaches to biblical criticism, as well as doctrinal and ethical issues. Ruth B. Edwards says:

Can old views about ‘natural law’ or the subordination of women be sustained in the modern world? Can our doctrines of God, Creation, ‘Man’, Sexuality, and Priesthood be rethought and reformulated, so as to make them intelligible to contemporary thinkers without destroying the traditional faith. Secondly, how in practical terms are the Churches to react to the process of democratization and social change? Can they continue with hierarchical and authoritative models of ministry in the face of the modern climate not to mention New Testament teaching about the Church as a community? How can the Churches teach the acceptability of men and women before God, and continue to discriminate against women in their own ministry and organization? How is ‘apostolate of the laity’ and the idea of ‘every member ministry’ to be put into practice? Thirdly, how are the Churches to respond to the challenge of the feminist movement? Can we adapt our liturgies and forms of worship to include women without destroying something valuable? Is it right to address God as ‘Mother’ or refer to God as ‘she’? Is motherhood incompatible with ministry? How can the Church make best use of the gifts and experiences of women? What difference does the admission of women clergy make to the life of the Church? Do the Bible and tradition require an all-male priesthood, and if not, is it right for women to continue to be excluded, as they still are in some denominations?¹⁶

Looking at this convinces me more that women occupy more responsibilities in ministry than men, but some view women as different—a level that is below the level of men in ministry. I am also convinced that God has different views about the role of women in ministry. These views differ from what some believe about women in ministry today. Observing women performing ministerial duties in different capacities today shows that most of those duties are productive for the spreading of the gospel. Persons must give greater consideration to the role of women in ministry than that given thirty years ago.

¹⁶ Ruth B. Edwards, *The Case for Women’s Ministry: Biblical Foundations in Theology* (London, UK: SPCK, 1989), 130.

As a minister and a theologian who spent several years in the seminary studying theology and analyzing philosophical ideas about the role of women in ministry, I found several biblical grounds that support and do not support the role of women in ministry. The main idea that I found and seems to allow some challenges to women in ministry are mostly based on biblical philosophy. Grounds that do not support the role of women in ministry that I found are based on church tradition and philosophy—they are not biblical material. Looking at them with deep consideration, I believe that one can redefine the role of women in ministry, and we can have a better understanding about how persons should view women regarding ministry.

I also encountered many questions about the role of women in ministry while I pastored. There is a great awakening within the female portions of congregations in Africa that want to devote their lives to doing God's work, but the conference stops them because of their gender. Most of the time, these women who are really devoted to the work of God in church congregations want to take part in ministry and stopping them from doing some duties because of their gender makes them feel jealous and wanting to rebel against the church. Dealing with situations like this is difficult. Most of the time I had to refer them to the church manual, to church policy, or to the conference office to clarify the position of the church when they ask for an explanation on this matter.

The church manual, church policy, and the conference does give answers, but women still challenge the answer. As a result, as the local pastor I came up with a strategy to settle the problem. Most of the time I brought solutions based on speaking to them as friends to satisfy them. For example, I had to invite them for a dinner at my house, talk with them gently and politely, and try to explain to them calmly the position

of the church and what the Bible says about the matter. On some occasions it worked, but on others it did not work. Based on this experience I decided to consecrate a time to study the issue of the role of women in ministry and I hope that the answer that I will find will satisfy everyone, because this study will help both men and women that want to pursue a ministerial career.

Reflection

As previously stated in my contextual analysis and the introduction of my synergy, a conflict exists between the western church and the southern church regarding the issue of the role of women in ministry. The church in the southern part of the world still holds the view that women do not belong in ministry, whereas the church in the western part of world holds a new theology that accepts women in ministry. I witnessed this when I compared the Kettering Seventh-day Church, a church that I attend, and the Seventh-day Adventist Church Federation north of Madagascar. These two gaps create an atmosphere of separation between the church in the southern part of the world and the church in the western part of the world. If we are not careful on the issue of the role of women in ministry there is no doubt that the church will split.

I pointed out the differences and the similarities between Kettering Seventh-day Adventist Church, a church that I attend, and Seventh-day Adventist Federation north of Madagascar where I was a pastor for several years. To be brief, these two churches have different positions concerning the role of women in ministry. When comparing Kettering Seventh-day Adventist Church and the Seventh-day Adventist Federation north of Madagascar, the different points of view that these two churches have reflected the

differences that the worldwide church has regarding the role of women in ministry. With all of these problems, the next generation church will be a victim of the problems that the church of today faces. So, if today's church is not careful in handling the issue of the role of women in ministry, the next generation's church will either have another form of a church that will be more confused than the one that we have in our day or a church that is well-established with a well-organized structure regarding the role of women in ministry.

This project will be a study that will try to give more understanding about the role of women in ministry. By doing this, the project will discuss ideas that will suggest how the church can and will be united on the view of the role of women in ministry. The project will discuss theological points of view that both support and do not support the role of women in ministry and will discuss the impact of the role of women in ministry for the next generation.

Serving as a local church pastor and completing my B.Th. degree in Uganda and my master's degree at Andrews University caused exposure to several issues about the role of women in ministry. My mind could not stop to think about the issues on the role of women in ministry that these experiences revealed to me. Theologians and Bible scholars examined the issues about women in ministry as a conflict between conservative and liberal theologians. Examining clearly at the ideas that theologians and Bible scholars present on the issues of the role of women in ministry makes it clear that the only solution that can bring an agreement between the conservative and the liberal theologians on the role of women in ministry is to create a bridge that can accommodate both conservative and liberal viewpoints.

As a Christian and as a minister I always said that separation of the church is not God's plan for the church. Throughout the Bible—from the Book of Genesis to the Book of Revelation—God emphasized unity among God's people (the Church). I still believe that the unity of the church is God's utmost desire despite the major changes and separations in Christianity throughout history.

Conclusion

The role of women in ministry is a pertinent issue for today's church. This issue is vital for the life of the church because if it does not get solved and persons still raise questions on this issue of the role of women in ministry, there will be a division that will separate the western church and the southern and eastern church. This division will bring chaos in the Christian world, and it can even lead to a permanent separation of the western, southern, and eastern churches. Without a doubt, the next generation of the global church will be a victim of this division if there is no solution that will help the next generation handle this issue from today's theologians and scholars.

This study of the role of women in ministry will seek to create a common bridge of understanding about the role of women in ministry that will unite the church and protect the church from the probable chaos for the church's next generation. This study will also clarify what should be the role of women in ministry in our days. The project will suggest and examine many ideas. In the end, the project will conclude based on these ideas that will clarify the role of women in ministry today.

CHAPTER TWO

BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS

Introduction

Women in ministry has been an issue within the church and throughout the Bible. The Bible does not talk much about the role of women in ministry, but the Bible does include a strong philosophy that does not accommodate women in ministry. At the same time, the Bible mentions a few women who have involvement in ministry. In the story of creation found in Genesis chapter one, God created man and woman equally in the image of God.¹ Neither received more of the image of God than the other. The Bible insinuates the equality of the sexes. As persons – spiritual beings standing before God – men and women are unconditionally identical. Regardless of this equality, Genesis chapter two gives a further comprehensive explanation regarding the conception of the two human beings that discloses variants in their God-given tasks and duties.

God did not create man and woman at the same time. God created Adam first and Eve, after some time, second to be Adam's helper. Eve was equal to Adam, but God gave her the role and responsibility of submitting to Adam. The word helper conveys very positive connotations since God portrays Godself as the helper of Israel in Deuteronomy 33:7 and Psalm 33:20. The word designates somebody in a service connected to another. The submission of wives to their husbands was part of the plan from the beginning, even

¹ All biblical citations will be from the New Living Translation, unless otherwise noted, Genesis 1:27.

before the curse. The first books of the Bible institute both the equality of man and woman and the support role of the wife (Ex. 21:15, 17, 28–31; Nm. 5:19–20, 29; 6:2; 30:1–16). The disobedience of Adam and Eve found in Genesis 3:16–19 brought certain consequences. For the woman, God pronounced a curse that included intensified pain in childbirth and tension in the submissive relationship of husband and wife. Genesis says the woman's "desire" will be for her husband, but he shall "rule" over her (Gen. 3:16). In Genesis 4:7, the author uses the same word "desire" to mean "excessive control over." Thus, the curse in Genesis 3:16 refers to a new desire on the part of the woman to exercise control over her husband, but he will in fact oppressively rule and exert authority over her.

Throughout the Old Testament, women had some role in the spiritual life of Israel, but commonly they were not leaders. Women, like Deborah (Judg. chapter four), were undoubtedly the exception and not the rule. There is no record of a woman with a partial divinary office nor of a woman as a priest. Israel never had a queen. No women wrote books in either the Old Testament or the New Testament. Isaiah 3:12 indicates that God allowed women to rule as part of God's judgment on the sinning nation. Women never took ongoing leadership positions in Israel nor the church. For example, in the crisis caused by Josiah's discovery of the law in the temple, Huldah did not go to the court to preach to the king and people, but the court came to her, and she spoke privately to the king's emissaries. The men listened and heeded her counsel so that she left without commanding. This is typical of women's leadership roles. Women counseled, taught, and judged, but almost always privately. Their messages had theological content, but they did

not preach nor teach from positions of formal authority. Women taught in private and led alongside men. Dan Doriani says:

Virtually without exception for nineteen centuries, orthodox Christian Theologians shared the views of this book. They said women ought to learn quietly and submissively. Women could teach informally but not authoritatively. God fashioned men and women and ordained a structure for their relationships. He appointed males to lead the church and home. Adam was the head of Eve from the beginning, but after the fall, her subordination became subjugation, both as a punishment for her sin and because men and women strive for dominance and men generally win.²

During Jesus's time, Jesus revealed love and admiration for women. The core of the Greek, Roman, and Jewish principles, which viewed women nearly on the level of properties, excluded women from learning. The Jewish Talmud assumed that it was better to burn the Torah than to teach it to a woman. However, Jesus by no means took the same position on women simply as the result of their very natures. He was friendly to them (Mt. 13:33; 22:1–2; 24:41; Lk. 15:8–10) and specifically applied his teaching to them (Mt. 10:34ff). Some biblical examples portray women as accomplishing ministerial responsibilities. For instance, in the Old Testament, God used Miriam as a prophet during the time of the great exodus (Ex. 15:20). Deborah effectively led in guiding God's army (Judg. chapters four through five) as both a prophet and a judge. Huldah, another prophet, was a vibrant founder of the influential religious reform under King Josiah (2 Kgs. chapter twenty-two; 2 Chronicles chapter thirty-four). Craig S. Keener wrote that "In the Old Testament, true prophetesses included Miriam (Ex. 15:20), Deborah (Judg. 4:4),

² Dan Doriani, *Women and Ministry: What the Bible Teaches* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2003), 147–148.

Huldah (2 Kings 22: 14; 2 Chron. 34:22), and apparently Isaiah's wife (Isa. 8:3)."³

Earlier, he noted that:

Some passages in the Bible support a wide variety of women's ministry, especially those passages that give explicit examples of women prophetesses, a judge with authority over all of God's people, a probable apostle, and women who shared in Paul's ministry of the gospel. Another passage (1 Tim. 2:11–14) appears to forbid women from teaching Scripture in the presence of men, and it is one of two passages that actually can be understood to prohibit women's public speech altogether. Unfortunately, some Christians who start with one group of texts view with suspicion Christians who stay with the other group of texts, sometimes even questioning their evangelical commitments.⁴

The New Testament also reveals the essential roles that women shared in the ministry of the early church. Contrary to the cultural norm of that time regarding the status of women in society, the Apostle Paul frequently refers to the contributions made by women. For instance, Paul speaks of women who "worked hard with him" in the work of the gospel (Rom. 16:6, chapter twelve; Phil. 4:3). At Philippi, Paul described Euodias and Syntyche as "fellow-workers" alongside Paul. This description is the same wording used to describe other young ministers who served with Paul such as Timothy, Epaphroditus, Titus, and Luke.⁵ Furthermore, as a servant (diakonos) at the church in Cenchrea (Rom. 16:1–2), Paul obviously viewed Phoebe as more than simply a helper. In fact, Paul uses the same word (diakonos) to refer to other ministers and leaders in a congregation, including himself. From these and many other writings, clearly Paul advocated for women in ministry. Contrary to the social order of the day, he frequently recognized the Spirit-inspired work that many women shared as fellow laborers.

³ Craig S. Keener, "Women in Ministry: Another Egalitarian Perspective," in *Two Views on Women in Ministry*, ed. James R. Beck and Craig L. Blomberg (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), 208.

⁴ Keener, "Women in Ministry," 205–206.

⁵ Doriani, *Women and Ministry*, 42.

Many theologians, lay church members (congregation), and church leaders try to come up with ideas about the role of women in ministry. The more they investigate the matter, the more confused the matter becomes. For many years, the role of women in ministry served as a source of debate, and as a source of division within certain churches. With the increasingly diverse operating contexts and the quest for improved ideas on this matter, non-biblically based speculations arise, which persons mostly based on human cultures.

This biblical foundation analysis is a companion to the biblical guide designed to help understand and draw a common line regarding the role of women in ministry. This chapter will focus on the mission and ministry of Phoebe to the church in Rome, Priscilla and Aquila, and Andronicus and Junia, found in Romans 16:1–7, which will eventually highlight the role of women in ministry according to the New Testament (Apostle Paul). The end includes a conclusion drawn from Romans 16:1–7 about the role of women in ministry.

Literary Context of Romans 16:1–2

The last chapter of Paul's letter to Rome, which is Romans chapter sixteen, stands apart from all the rest. Its composition mainly consists of an extended sequence of greetings, interrupted by a warning, and concluded by a doxology that Paul failed to compose. The chapter seems to lack any theological interests when compared with Paul's prior writing in this book. Those who implement a sociological method of study considered the rich light it sheds on the arrangement and construction of the early Christian church. Amazingly, Paul knew so many people, and commentators long

questioned how it could be so. Some suggested that Romans chapter sixteen represents all or part of a letter written to a church Paul founded. Details from newly discovered early papyrus confirmed this. Brendan Byrne, says:

The sixteenth and final chapter of Paul's letter to Rome stands apart from all the rest. It consists largely of a long series of greetings, interrupted by a warning (vv 17–20) and concluded by a doxology (vv 25–27) not composed by Paul. At first sight the chapter appears devoid of theological interest in comparison with what has gone before. But recent studies—especially those adopting a sociological approach—have pointed to the rich light it sheds upon the composition and structures of the early Christian church. Interpreters have long wondered how Paul could have known so many persons (no less that twenty-six are greeted in vv 3–16) in a distant community that he had neither founded himself nor visited. This has led to the suggestion that the material contained in chapter 16 represents all or part of a letter written to a church founded by Paul (Ephesus being the usual suggestion), a theory that received considerable impetus from the discovery of the early papyrus.⁶

Romans 16:1–7 is a letter of recommendation that Paul wrote for Phoebe. Letters of commendation were common in the ancient world, since those traveling were often unknown and needed hospitality and support to carry on their business or ministry. This passage concludes Paul's discussion about his plans. He ends his letter to the Christians of Rome with a letter of recommendation for Phoebe, who is a minister of the Church of Cenchreae—a port serving the town of Corinth—from which he writes.

One can divide Romans 16:1–7 into two parts: Romans 16:1–2 (the recommendation for Phoebe), and Romans 16:3–6ff (greetings to many persons in the Roman community).⁷ He references at least twenty-four people by name. It seems that Paul uses these greetings to mention his visit to Rome. Most of the people he greets are people he knows and worked with, and some are just names that come to his mind, which

⁶ Brendan Byrne, *Romans*, vol. 6, *Sacra Pagina*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1996), 446.

⁷ Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 33, *The Anchor Bible* (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1993), 728.

perhaps was the case for the last ten names. For the twelve remaining names, it looks like he knew them personally. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, says:

Paul now includes in his letter of recommendation for Phoebe greetings to various persons in the Roman church, mentioning at least twenty-four people by name. Indirectly, Paul is commending himself on his coming visit to Rome. Some of them are people whom Paul has known and with whom he has worked; others are those whose names have come to his attention. This may be the case at least for the last ten named, in vv 14–15. The way he speaks of the twelve others suggests that he knew them personally: Prisca, Aquila, Epaenetus, Andronicus, Junia, Ampliatus, Stachys, Apelles, Arbanus, Persis, and Rufus and his mother.⁸

Paul's style of writing here is very different from how he writes to churches he founded. Paul normally chooses not to greet a lot of people the way he does here. Paul perhaps wanted to inform all the people he knew in the church of Rome about Phoebe's mission there.

Another aspect that deserves mention is that, of the twenty-four persons Paul talks about in Romans chapter sixteen, Paul speaks about nine women. Paul points out quite a few of them. It seems that nothing in Paul's observation defends the assumption that these women functioned in ways that varied either in kind or quantity from the way men functioned. All the individuals listed appeared to be involved in duties of ministry—a fact for consideration in any assessment of the roles of women in ministry. Paul wrote Romans chapter sixteen prior to the establishment of church offices, and women already had involvement in ministry. Some of them, like Phoebe, had a significant leadership role in the church. Carol A. Newsom says:

A second unusual feature of this set of greetings is the prominence of women within it. First comes Phoebe, whom Paul recommends and who is probably to be the bearer of the letter itself. He describes Phoebe as “a deacon of the church at Cenchreae” and a “benefactor of many and of myself as well.” Although Paul writes at a time prior to the official establishment of church offices, the fact that Phoebe is a “deacon” (not a “deaconess” as the RSV erroneously translates)

⁸ Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 734.

surely means that she serves in some significant leadership role in the congregation at Cenchreae. That she is the “benefactor” (or, better, “a patron”) signals that Phoebe is a person of some wealth and power and that she used those assets on behalf of Paul and other Christians. Among the persons Paul greets in Rome, nine women appear: Pisca, Mary, Junia, Tryphaena, Tryphosa, Persis, the mother of Rufus, Julia, and the sister of Nereus. Paul singles out several of them for comments...Nothing in Paul’s comment justifies the conclusion that these women worked in ways that differed either in kind or in quantity from the ways in which men worked.⁹

Who Was Phoebe?

The port city of Cenchreae was the hometown of Phoebe—a gentle Christian. Her name comes from the Greek and means “pure, radiant as the moon.” The description that Paul uses to describe Phoebe in Romans 16:1 is: A deacon διάκονον and helper προστάτις. There is a possibility that she was a patron of sorts. Paul spoke highly of Phoebe. He introduces Phoebe to the Roman Christians as sister, servant, saint, and helper. However, one can also interpret the word servant here as deacon if taking into consideration both generic and technical usages of the word. The Greek root means literally “one who minister or serves.” Of course, taken in that sense, the word describes not only Phoebe and other deaconesses in the early church but also countless women who gave and do give themselves untiringly to the work of the kingdom through ministries within the local church.

Biblical Context of Romans 16:1–2

I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deacon of the church at Cenchreae, so that you may welcome her in the Lord as is fitting for the saints, and help her in whatever she may require from you, for she has been a benefactor of many and of myself as well. (Holy Bible NRSV)

⁹ Carol A. Newsom, *Women’s Bible Commentary*, expanded ed. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998), 410.

Regarding the word ‘servant,’ some also use this word in a practical sense to describe a purposeful clerical office, such as the office allotted to Stephen (Acts 6:1–7). The apostles formed this office to train a corps of pious saints to meet physical and social needs so that meeting these needs would not drag the apostles away from the primary ministry of the word (Acts 6:4). Undoubtedly in the New Testament, a woman can find plenty of occasions for service as a deacon or deaconess with or without official titles. On the other hand, if persons consider deacon or deaconess a position of official spiritual leadership, there are other passages for consideration, such as 1 Timothy chapters two and three.¹⁰

Literary Context of Romans 16:3–5

Greet Prisca and Aquila, who work with me in Christ Jesus, and who risked their necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. Greet also the church in their house. Greet my beloved Epaenetus, who was the first convert in Asia for Christ. (Holy Bible NRSV)

Roman 16:3–5 introduces another female figure named Priscilla. Luke reports that Priscilla is married to a Jew named Aquila. In Acts chapter eighteen, Luke uses the little `descriptor of the name Priskilla. Acts chapter eighteen introduces Priscilla as a recent Jewish immigrant from Italy as a result of the decree of Emperor Claudius. There is a possibility that Priscilla was a Roman Gentile. Aquila was originally from Pontus and was a tentmaker. Priscilla and Aquila gained fame in Ephesus because of their hard work in establishing churches and risking their lives for Paul. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, says:

¹⁰ Dorothy Patterson, “The Women in Paul’s Life: Two Competing Bibles for Women Highlight the Human Component of Bible Translation and Interpretation,” *Christianity Today* 41, no. 12 (October 27, 1997): 74, <https://search-ebscohost-com.utsdayton.idm.oclc.org/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rft&AN=ATLA0001005800&site=ehost-live>.

In Acts 18 Luke uses the diminutive form of the name Priskilla, “Priscilla,” which is also found here in some minuscule MSS of Romans (81,365, 614, 629, 630, 945) and in some ancient versions (Vg, Syr) as the result of copyists’ harmonization. These persons are identified in Acts 18 as Jewish Christians, husband and wife, who had recently come to Corinth after being banished from Italy as a result of the decree of the emperor, Claudius. Aquila was originally from Pontus and was a tentmaker (*skenopoios*), which probably means that he made not military leather tents, but linen tents and awnings for private citizens. Having left Italy and at first settled in Corinth, he and his wife engaged in tentmaking and eventually moved to Ephesus, where they took up residence and instructed among others Apollos, the Alexandrian rhetor.¹¹

The Gentile church was thankful for the hard work of Priscilla and Aquila in Ephesus.

Luke documented Priscilla and Aquila as trained teachers for having trained the eloquent Apollos. Apollos did not understand salvation well, but he became well acquainted with scripture. Priscilla and Aquila fostered his knowledge. Without reluctance Apollos acknowledged Priscilla’s teachings. Far from reproving Priscilla for teaching a man, Luke and Paul endorsed Priscilla and her husband for their truthful teaching about God.

Priscilla and Aquila are the most well-known missionary couple in the New Testament. Modern exegetes like to highlight the depiction of Priscilla and Aquila in the New Testament and in the Pauline epistles as amazingly positive. This refers particularly to Priscilla, who in some way must have been more significant than her husband. Writers portray her as one of the most diverse and well-traveled women mentioned in the New Testament tradition.¹²

Paul calls Priscilla *coworker* and emphasizes her power in the early church. Paul uses the same term to identify leaders like Mark, Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Apollos, and

¹¹ Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 735.

¹² Dominika A. Kurek-Chomycz, “Is There an ‘Anti-Priscan’ Tendency in the Manuscripts?: Some Textual Problems with Prisca and Aquila,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 125, no. 1 (Spring 2006): 107–28, <https://search-ebscohost-com.utsdayton.idm.oclc.org/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rfh&AN=ATLA0001507831&site=ehost-live>.

Luke. Furthermore, writers state her name first in four of the six references to Priscilla and Aquila, suggesting she is the more famous of the two, and both Luke and Paul honor her in this way.¹³ The fact that Priscilla's name comes before Aquila's name draws extraordinary attention from commentators, and practically all of them consider this meaningful. Looking at this fact from a general point of view it is clear that Paul and the church at that time had more consideration for Priscilla. This implies that Priscilla had more authority and more responsibility in the ministry work that she did with her husband.

Apparently, Priscilla and Aquila failed to receive their Christian formations from Paul. They were already in Corinth before Paul's arrival, and some assume that they started the church in Corinth before Paul arrived. This means that Priscilla and Aquila started a ministry not within Paul's framework. Later, they joined the ministry of Paul. This created a problem among the Jews in Corinth. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, says:

The mention of Prisca and Aquila creates a problem. Were they among Jewish Christians already in Corinth before Paul first arrived there? So Acts 18:1–2 implies. But if so, who then founded the Christian church in Corinth? Paul is usually regarded as the founder; but then that would have to be understood as apart from Prisca and Aquila, who were already Christians. It is far from clear that they “received all their Christian formation from Paul.” Lampe plausibly suggests that it was Paul who urged them to return to Rome as a “vanguard” to assemble a house church and prepare for his arrival.¹⁴

Romans 16:5 refers to a church that meets at their house. It says: “Greetings to the church that meets at their home” (Rom. 16:5). This is an interesting point because there is a probability that the church in Cenchreae was a home church in Phoebe's house. This aspect can demonstrate the domination and authority that Phoebe had in the church of

¹³ “The Women in Paul's Life,” 75.

¹⁴ Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 735.

Cenchreae, and there is also a possibility here that the church that Priscilla and Aquila founded in Corinth was a house church, meaning that the church was in their house. It seems then that when the New Testament mentions women doing ministry it has to do with a house church—not a temple. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, says: “Lampe plausibly suggests that it was Paul who urged them to return to Rome as a ‘vanguard’ to assemble a house church and prepare for his arrival.”¹⁵

Priscilla had a ministry and Paul recognized her ministry, although she did not receive her first trainings about Christianity from Paul. Simply put, Priscilla was in full-time ministry since she founded a church and worked like any other minister during that time. This shows a woman’s involvement in ministry and Paul was not against it. Instead, he promoted it by calling Priscilla and Aquila to Rome to do more work, although her ministry was limited to house churches.

Literary Context of Romans 16:7

Greet Andronicus and Junia, my relatives who were in prison with me; they are prominent among the apostles, and they were in Christ before I was. (Holy Bible NRSV)

Paul greeted several women believers in Romans 16:7 by name, and one of them was Junia. One sees discrepancies amid biblical scholars when they discuss the gender of the name Junia(s) in Roman 16:7. Some claim the name is masculine, while others claim that it is feminine. Evidence regarding the gender of this name is indecisive. Richard S.

Cervin says:

Modern commentators also disagree as to the gender of the name. Manfred T. Brauch merely assumes that the name is feminine and provides no other comment, as does W.H. Griffith Thomas. Others assume, without comment, that

¹⁵ Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 735.

the name is masculine. Many commentators note that the gender is problematic but nevertheless cast their vote for either the masculine or feminine form of various reasons, often because one or the other is more probable. Some say that the issue cannot be resolved. Lexicographers are likewise uncertain. Most NT dictionaries assume that the name is masculine even though they also note that the feminine is possible. Among the grammarians who touch on this issue, Blass-Debrunner-Funk and Robertson are of no help (the latter merely notes the ambiguity), but Moulton-Howard believed the name to be feminine.¹⁶

Although determining the gender of the name Junia is difficult, attempting to do a grammatical and syntactical analysis of the name and the entire Romans 16:7 can clarify it even though one cannot draw a definite conclusion. There is a possibility that Junia was a contraction of Junianus, but many believe that Junia was a woman. So far, no observed indication of any kind for the abbreviated form of Junias was found. There is no occurrence of Junias in any existing Greek or Latin text for the New Testament. If Junias is indeed an abbreviated form of Junianus, why then does Junias not exist in the Greek or the Latin New Testament text? There is no certainty that Junianus was abbreviated at all, because Junias does not exist in the Greek or the Latin New Testament text. Richard S. Cervin says:

There are two problems with this claim. First, there is so far no empirical evidence whatsoever for the abbreviated form of Junias. This name does not occur in any extant Greek or Latin document for the NT milieu. If Junias is indeed a shortened form of the common name Junianus, why then does the name Junias never occur? Secondly, in light of the fact that the name Junias does not occur, we cannot be certain that the name Junianus has in fact been shortened at all.¹⁷

Early analysts took the name to be feminine. The name was very well-known in Rome; however, the masculine form Junias is not proven. No one raised a question about the gender until the nineteenth century. Paul identifies Junia as a prominent apostle. Looking

¹⁶ Richard S. Cervin, "A Note Regarding the Name Junia(s) in Romans 16:7," *New Testament Studies* 40, no. 3 (July 1994): 465–470.

¹⁷ Cervin, "A Note Regarding the Name Junia(s) in Romans 16:7," 466–470.

at Paul's defense of his own apostleship in Galatians 1:1, it is unlikely that Paul considered Junia an apostle unless he were certain that God specifically called her to serve as a missionary in the church. Such an acknowledgement shows that at least one woman retained a position of leadership and authority early in the life of the Christian church community.¹⁸

Even though the gender of the name Junia has not been determined, what is sure is that Junia as a person was a woman. This is proven by the fact that many early analysts up to the twelfth century assumed Junia to be the wife of Andronicus. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, says: "Many ancient commentators, up to the twelfth century, understood either Iounian or Ioulian to be the wife of Andronicus."¹⁹

Social Context of Romans 16:1–7

I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deacon of the church at Cenchreae, so that you may welcome her in the Lord as is fitting for the saints, and help her in whatever she may require from you, for she has been a benefactor of many and of myself as well. Greet Prisca and Aquila, who work with me in Christ Jesus, and who risked their necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. Greet also the church in their house. Greet my beloved Epaenetus, who was the first convert in Asia for Christ. Greet Mary, who has worked very hard among you. Greet Andronicus and Junia, my relatives who were in prison with me; they are prominent among the apostles, and they were in Christ before I was. (Holy Bible NRSV)

There are warm greetings in Romans 16. The greetings in this passage consist of greetings to the saints and corporate greetings to one another.²⁰ The mention of Priscilla and Aquila in Romans 16: 3–5, who were among Paul's closest friends, and the fact that

¹⁸ "The Women in Paul's Life," 76.

¹⁹ Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 737.

²⁰ Robert L. Deffinbaugh, "Paul's Greetings (Romans 16:1–16)," Bible.org, 2019, <https://bible.org/seriespage/38-paul's-greetings-romans-161-16>.

Phoebe and Priscilla were both females serving the church, indicates some special communication or special acquaintance between Phoebe and Priscilla and Aquila.²¹ It can be argued that deaconesses are not given authority over men but only over women. Nothing in Paul's comments justifies the conclusion that these women worked in ways that differed, either in kind or in quality, from the ways in which men worked.²²

Textual and Biblical Analysis of Romans 16:1–2

Rhetorical Disposition of Romans 16:1–2

- a. Romans 15:14–16:24 is an appeal for cooperation in missionary activities in Jerusalem, Rome, and Spain.
- b. Romans 16:1–2 is a proposal of Phoebe as missionary patroness.
 - I. Romans 16:1a is a formula of recommendation.
 - II. Romans 16:1b contains Phoebe's credentials.
 - i. Formula of relationship: "our sister"
 - ii. Official status: "deacon of church in Kenchreia"
- c. Romans 16:2a–b. The desired action:
 - I. Romans 16:2a. Suitable reception to Rome "with full hospitality Worthy of the saints."
 - II. Romans 16:2b. The formula of requested aid. "Provide whatever she needs from you in the matter."
 - III. Romans 16:2c. The scope and rationale of the desired action.
 - i. Phoebe's past patronage of other missionaries.
 - ii. Phoebe's patronage of Paul.

²¹ Deffinbaugh, "Paul's Greetings (Romans 16:1–16)," <https://bible.org/seriespage/38-paul's-greetings-romans-161-16>.

²² Newsom, *Women's Bible Commentary*, 555.

In this text, we find the Greek word patroness which is προστάτις in Greek. This word indicates Phoebe's function and mission. Writers also use this word in Thessalonians 5:12 and 1 Timothy 3:4, 5, 5–7. It characterizes someone with authority who presides or governs a community of believers. The Greek word προστάτις, which means “patroness,” has a masculine form. This use of the masculine form is to designate a steward of a king's property or the chief officers over people. One can see this in Chronicles 27:31 and Chronicles 8:10 and 24:11. Justin Martyr an early Christian apologist used the Greek word προστάτις (patroness) for a person presiding at a communion.²³

There is no doubt then that Phoebe was a leader who had authority and wealth. Whether her leadership and authority extended to the church is unclear. She had businesses in Rome, quite probably legal businesses. Paul probably knew previously of her intention to travel to Rome and took the opportunity to write the whole letter, with the recommendation of Phoebe attached, so that on passing through to Corinth's western port, she could pick up the letter and carry it forward. The text does not suggest that she was a patroness (προστάτις) of the church at Cenchreae. Esther L. Yue says,

However, this does not entail that Phoebe was such kind of patroness to the church or the community as a whole, since she was not said to be the προστάτις of the church at Cenchreae. If so, we have no indication in the text that her house was a venue of church meetings. Nor can we claim, as Jouette Bassler does, “as a patron she would, of course, have provided funds for the church and probably publicly presented it when necessary.”²⁴

Romans 16:1 also uses the Greek word διάκονον. The word διάκονον, which means “deacon” in this passage, has a masculine gender. This implies that Phoebe was a deacon

²³ Esther Yue L. Ng, “Phoebe as Prostatis,” *Trinity Journal* 25, no. 1 (Spring 2004): 4, <https://search-ebscohost-com.utsdayton.idm.oclc.org/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rft&AN=ATLA0001406692&site=ehost-live>.

²⁴ Ng, “Phoebe as Prostatis,” 7.

like any other male deacon. Paul's wording here is somewhat confusing to the reader because Phoebe is a woman (feminine), but he uses a masculine gender when he describes her to the church in Rome.

Another observation is that in Romans 16:1 the word διάκονον describes the official status of Phoebe as its source in the genitive case, τῆς ἐκκλησίας (of the church) τῆς ἐν Κενχρεαῖς (in Cenchrea). The genitive case is a grammatical case for nouns and pronouns most commonly used for showing possession. Typically, forming the genitive case involves adding an apostrophe followed by 's' to the end of a noun. The use of the genitive case in this text demonstrates Phoebe belongs to the church in Cenchrea (Διάκονον τῆς ἐκκλησίας τῆς ἐν Κενχρεαῖς). She is a servant (deacon) of the church in Cenchrea. Gregory R Perry says:

In Romans 16:1, διάκονον also functions as the head of noun of verbal quality in construct with the genitive phrase, τῆς ἐκκλησίας and its modifying prepositional phrase, τῆς ἐν Κενχρεαῖς. Should Paul's readers interpret the genitive construct as the source or the object of διάκονον? Is Phoebe a διάκονον "from the Church" or "of the Church"? Perhaps Paul intended a genitive of place to describe Phoebe as a διάκονον "in Church the one that I in Cenchrea." While it may be difficult to discern the exact nuance of the genitive case, one thing is clear. Phoebe is not Paul's personal attendant but the διάκονον of the Church in Cenchrea. Though she may well have carried his letter to the Romans, Paul's empathetic appositional construction with οὗσαν on the other side of διάκονον and his further description of the genitive construct τῆς ἐκκλησίας τῆς ἐν Κενχρεαῖς on the other side of διάκονον, characterizes Phoebe as an agent of the Church in Cenchrea.²⁵

The Greek word Διάκονον is a predicate accusation in simple opposition to Φοίβην (Phoebe). Made sympathetic by the feminine participle οὗσαν in Romans 16:6, New Testament writers frequently used this form of oppositional structure to designate those who embrace an official position. One can find examples of this in John 11:49 (Caiphas),

²⁵ Gregory R. Perry, "Phoebe of Cenchreae and 'Women' of Ephesus: 'Deacons' in the Earliest Churches," *Presbyterion* 36, no. 1 (Spring 2010): 16, <https://search-ebscohost-com.utsdayton.idm.oclc.org/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rft&AN=ATLA0001787362&site=ehost-live>.

Acts 18:12 (Gallio), and Acts 24:10 (Felix). Writers also used this structure to designate other identifying features or positions such as in Matthew 7:11 (If you are evil) and 1 Timothy 1:13 (Though I was a blasphemer). This function and the use of the genitive case found in the text suggest ultimate evidence that Phoebe was famous and typically worked as διάκονον in the church at Cenchrea.

One also finds the word διάκονον in 1 Corinthians 12:5 and 1 Timothy 1:12–17. The use of διακονία in 1 Corinthians 12:5 clearly demonstrates the broad meaning of the διάκον word group to suggest a commissioned agency—something done or reassigned on behalf of a social superior by a go-between (διάκονον) to or for someone else. First Timothy 1:12–17 shows the swaying of Paul’s roots in his proclamation of the gospel and its effects on his life and the life of his followers. When Paul writes of his assignment to serve θέμενος εἰς διακονίαν (1 Tm. 1:12) and his assignment as a preacher and apostle and teacher of the nation (1 Tm. 2:11, 2 Tm. 1:11), he references his call on the Damascus Road and the command of Jesus Christ (1 Tm. 1:1, Acts 9:1–19, 1 Tm. 2:11). The word διακονίων found in 1 Corinthians 12:5 refers only to the official work of preaching, to apostles, or to their commissioned representatives and not activities gifts entrusted to every member of Christ’s body.²⁶

The connection of language construction between Romans 16:1 and Romans 16:2 demonstrates a unique language structure that is unusual in Pauline writing. After commending Phoebe in Romans 16:1, Paul in Romans 16:2 continues by essentially saying, “I ask you to receive her in the Lord in a way worthy of his people.” Grammatically this looks like the beginning of a sentence, but it is a continuation of Romans 16:1. One sees the connection through the precise interpretation, “I commend to

²⁶ Perry, “Phoebe of Cenchreae and ‘Women’ of Ephesus,” 20–22.

you our sister Phoebe, in order that you may receive her in the Lord in a way that is worthy of his people.” The necessity of visitors’ acceptance by people in the areas they visited was important in the ancient world. If not given hospitality, they would have no position in either law or tradition. Universal brotherhood did not exist in the ancient world. Paul commends Phoebe to the believers in Rome, understanding that she needs for others to receive her generously, and with the belief that they will accept her in a way admirable of God’s people. This is an unusual expression for Paul that values Phoebe’s mission and ministry. This suggests that Paul gave her a higher recommendation that is more of a ministerial recommendation. Coli G. Kruse says:

Having commended Phoebe, Paul adds: I ask you to receive her in the Lord in a way worthy of his people...While the NIV construes this as the beginning of a new sentence, it is in fact a continuation of what is found in 16:1. The connection can be indicated by the literal translation: ‘I commend to you our sister Phoebe...in order that you may receive her in the Lord in a way that is worthy of his people’...The need for travelers to be received by people in the places the visited was crucial in the ancient world. Unless they were accorded hospitality, they would have no standing in either law or custom. There was no such thing as universal brotherhood in the ancient world (see ‘Additional Note: Hospitality’, 478–79). Paul commended Phoebe to the believers in Rome knowing that she needs to be afforded hospitality, and with the expectation that they will receive her in a way worthy of God’s people. This is an unusual expression of Paul. He normally speaks of acting in a way that is worthy of one’s calling, or the gospel, or the Lord, of God (cf. Eph 4:1; Phil 1:27; Col 1:10; 1 Thess. 2:12). Only here in 16:2 does he speak of acting in a way that is worthy of God’s people. By this, presumably, he means to receive her in a way that is commensurate with their standing as people of God, that is, according to the love, generosity, and hospitality traits that should mark God’s people.²⁷

Archeological Evidence of the Church in Kenchreia

An excavation of Kenchreia, which lies on the Saronic Gulf—roughly fifty-five miles southeast of Corinth—suggests a widespread growth of the harbor and the

²⁷ Colin G. Kruse, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2012), 555.

neighboring inner-city zones through the Roman period. Scarce Greek writings were found, along with indications of immigration from Italy in the first century, but the presence of a Jewish population was not found. Pausanias refers to the temples of Artemis, Asklepios, Aphrodite, and Isis around Kenchreia, of which excavation confirmed the latter two.²⁸

Concerning archeological findings in urban areas, no indication was found of a house or tenement church in Kenchreia during the first century. Considering Paul's reference to such a church in Romans 16:1, apparently it was a church in Phoebe's house that by Paul or his coworkers founded working out of Corinth sometime between Paul's arrival at the center in 50 CE and the writing of Romans in 56–57.²⁹

There is no clear evidence in the text to prove that Phoebe was a προστάτις (patroness) of the church. On the other hand, she perhaps was a wealthy woman who had authority and was a leader. Archeological evidence did not find a church in Kenchreia during the first century. One may suppose that the church was a house church in Phoebe's house. Due to her wealth and her authority, and since the church was in her house, she perhaps had some influence on the church.

There is no doubt then that Phoebe was a deacon like any other male deacon of the church in Cenchrea. The use of the word διάκονον in the New Testament, especially in 1 Corinthians and 1 Timothy, clearly describes a duty given by a commissioned agency, and it also refers to the calling and proclamation of the gospel. The call Paul received on the Damascus Road was an official call to the work of preaching. These

²⁸ Robert Jewett, *Romans: A Commentary*, Hermeneia: A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2007), 943.

²⁹ Jewett, *Romans*, 944.

thoughts also can apply to Phoebe, because the word *διάκονον* in Roman 16:1 has the same root and meaning as the one found in 1 Corinthians and 1 Timothy. But the fact that archeological evidence does not prove the existence of a church building (temple) in Kenchreia during the first century (some suggested that the church in Kencheia mentioned in Romans 16:1 was probably a house church in Phoebe's house), shows that Phoebe failed to work for a physical church. More likely she was a well-respected evangelist.

Textual and Biblical Analysis of Romans 16:7

Greet Andronicus and Junia, my relatives who were in prison with me; they are prominent among the apostles, and they were in Christ before I was. (Holy Bible NRSV)

The word *Ἰουλίαν* found in Romans 16:7 also provides another clue about the role of women in ministry. After talking about Phoebe and Priscilla, Paul talks about *Ἰουλίαν* and Andronicus in Romans 16:7. Andronicus and Junia appear to be in Rome when Paul writes this letter. Paul writes to the church in Rome as noted in Romans chapter sixteen. Probably, Andronicus and Junia were Paul's family members or maybe fellow citizens. They are apparently from someplace close to Paul's home area of Tarsus. They were imprisoned for their Christian activities. The place of their imprisonment is not known so it is unclear if they were imprisoned with Paul; it could be in Ephesus, Philippi, or elsewhere. Romans failed to mention Paul's place of imprisonment but mentions that he was imprisoned seven times. Paul's style of articulation could mean only that they too (at some time) were imprisoned for the faith. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, says:

We do not know the place of such imprisonment; it could have been Ephesus (1 Cor. 15:32), or Philippi (Acts 16:23), or someplace else (2 Cor. 11:23), Clement

of Rome (1 Clem. 5:6) speaks of Paul being imprisoned seven times, yet never says where. It is possible, however, that Paul does not mean that Andronicus and Junia were imprisoned with him at the same place; his mode of expression could mean only that they too (at some time) had been imprisoned for the faith.³⁰

Before Paul's conversion, Christians and later members of the earliest church in Judea or Samaria already existed. Colin G. Kruse says: "The final piece of information Paul provides in Romans 16:7 concerning Andronicus and Junia is: and they were in Christ before I was, that is, they had become followers of Jesus Christ before Paul had his encounter with him on the Damascus Road."³¹ Andronicus is a well-confirmed and famous Greek name while Junius is not. The early fathers' common opinion was that Junius was Junia, and that she was a woman. The Greek document possibly has the derivation of Junia reading IOYNIAN. The opening vowel combination is very rare in Greek, Hebrew, or Aramaic/Syriac, and no clear origin for the name exists in these languages.³²

Most probably the origin of Junia is from the Roman name JUNIAS—a widespread and noble clan. However, is the name masculine or feminine? Is the name Junia or Junias? The obvious way to read the name is the accusative of the feminine form JUNIA (in Greek Ἰουνία in the nominative). All existing early translations—Old Latin, Vulgate, Sahidic, Bohairic Coptic, and Syriac versions—without exception transcribe the name in what one can take as the feminine form, but none gives a positive sign of a masculine name's transcription.

³⁰ Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 739.

³¹ Kruse, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, 562.

³² John Thorley, "Junia, a Woman Apostle," *Novum Testamentum* 38, no. 1 (January 1996): 8, <https://search-ebscohost-com.utsdayton.idm.oclc.org/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rft&AN=ATLA0001008883&site=ehost-live>.

However, the ending - A (with or without an accusative sign) can, in all the languages of the early translation, also be used for some masculine names. It is essential, therefore, to examine closely the way in which all such potentially ambiguous names are transcribed in the early translation. However, none of the statements in Romans 16:7 requires that Ἰουνίαν be a man unless one assumes that all apostles must be men.³³ The first question that comes to mind when reading Romans 16:7 is if Ἰουνίαν was an apostle?

The text reads as follows: “Ἀσπάσασθε Ἀνδρόνικον καὶ Ἰουνίαν, τοὺς συγγενεῖ μου καὶ συναιχμαλώτους μου, οἵτινές εἰσιν ἐπίσημοι ἐν τοῖς ἀποστόλοις, οἱ καὶ πρὸ ἐμοῦ γέγοναν ἐν Χριστῷ” or “Greet Andronicus and Junia kinsmen of me and fellow prisoners with me who are of not among the apostles who also before me were in Christ.” The word Ἰουνίαν has a circumflex accent on the Altima, which make the masculine name Ἰουνίας. But if it has an acute accent on the penult, one will read it as Ἰουνία. The text reads Ἰουνίαν, which is feminine. One can interpret the phrase ἐπίσημοι ἐν τοῖς ἀποστόλοις as “well-known among the apostle” or exclusively “well-known to the apostles.” To be precise, Junia among the apostles or someone well-known to the apostles.

One can translate the prepositional phrase ἐν τοῖς ἀποστόλοις as those marked (numbered) among the apostles or those taken in value. This can portray Andronicus and Junia as ἀποστόλοι (apostoloi). One must not confuse this appellation with hoi dodeka, which means the twelve (1 Cor. 15:5, 7 explains the distinction of apostoloi and dodeka). The early church failed to attribute the appellation of apostle only to the twelve. The early church also called apostles the others understood as commissioned nomadic evangelists.

³³ Thorley, “Junia, a Woman Apostle,” 20.

Consequently, Paul would transmit salutations to a male and female apostle to some of those who undoubtedly carried the Christian message to Rome ahead of him. One could deem them as corresponding messengers of the gospel—even if husband and wife—and not essentially two male representatives.

They were Jewish Christian apostles—perhaps from among the Jerusalem Hellenists as their name indicates—who foreshadowed the gospel before Paul. This means that Junia was not an apostle like the twelve apostles; she was an evangelist. Apostles are trans-local. Normally, they go outside the community unit to administer the church. This involves planting things that are absent. They do a lot of travelling outside the vicinity of their community and sphere of the mother or founding church. Evangelists are super-local. Usually, they are tied to the local sphere and established church and help with that development. They are the recruiters, and they tend to have one foot in the church and one foot outside. They make relationships with outsiders and then recruit them to Jesus and the local church. Building means recruiting outsiders and lead them to the gospel of Jesus but uniting them to what already exists. They help existing churches grow up and become bigger. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, says:

The prep. phrase *en tois apostolois* may mean “those of mark (number) among the apostles.” or “those held in esteem by the apostles.” Barrett, Cranfield, Lagrange, Lietzmann, Michel, Rengstorff, Schlatter, Schlier, Schnackenburg, Zeller, and BAGD take it in the former sense, as did most of the interpreters. Cornely and Zahn prefer the latter sense. The former sense would mean that Andronicus and Junia were *apostoloi*. This title is not to be confused with *hoi dodeka*, “the Twelve” (note the distinction of the two groups in 1 Cor. 15: 5,7). The title “apostle” was given in the early church not only to the Twelve, but to others as well who were understood as commissioned itinerant evangelists (e.g., commissioned by a church, Acts 13:1–3). At least sixteen persons are called “apostles” in the NT: the Twelve plus Barnabas and Paul (Acts 14:4, 14), unnamed persons (1 Cor. 9:5; 12:28; 2 Cor 8:23; 11:13; Eph 4:11), as well as possibly Andronicus and Junia here. See further Did. 11.3-6; Herm. Vis. 3.5.1; and Herm. Sim. 9.15.4; 9.16.5; 25.2. Thus Paul would be sending greetings to a

male and female apostle, to some of those who probably carried the Christian message to Rome before him. They could be considered paired messengers of the gospel, even if husband and wife, and not necessarily two male emissaries (see J. Jeremias, “Paarweise Sendung”); compare Aquila and Prisca. They would then have been Jewish Christian “apostles,” probably from among the Jerusalem Hellenists, as their name suggests, who would have been heralds of the gospel before Paul, “without being able to lay claim to an appearance of the risen Lord.” (Schanackenburg, “Apostles,” 294).³⁴

Finding the correct translation that fits this passage requires examining the best method for use in translating this passage. The scholar and theologian Michael Burer and his friend Wallace made a search of the occurrences of the phrase ἐπίσημοι ἐν τοῖς ἀποστόλοις in the database of the Thesaurus Linguae Graecae, which is the research center at the University of California, Irvine, and the standard form of papyri for every occurrence of ἐπίσημοι with ἐν and the dative. The results of this were practically undisputed. Every time ἐπίσημος occurred with an ἐν and the personal dative, the sense was exclusive (“well-known to”) every time except once.³⁵ C. M. Tuckett says:

The expression ἐπίσημοι ἐν τοῖς ἀποστόλοις is more naturally taken with an exclusive force rather than an inclusive one. The lexical and syntactical evidence seem to support this hypothesis. First, the lexical issue. ἐπίσημος can mean “well known, prominent, outstanding, famous, notable, notorious.” The lexical domain can roughly be broken down into two streams: ἐπίσημος is used either in an implied comparative sense (“prominent, outstanding [among]”) or in an elative sense (“famous, well known [to/by]”). Secondly, the key to determining the meaning of the term in any given passage is both the general context and the specific collocation of this word with its adjuncts. Hence, we turn to the ἐν τοῖς ἀποστόλοις. As a working hypothesis, we would suggest the following. Since a noun in the genitive is typically used with comparative adjectives, we might expect such with an implied comparison too. Thus, if in Rom 16:7 Paul meant to say that Andronicus and Junia were outstanding among apostles, we have expected him to use the genitive (τῶν) ἀποστόλων. On the other hand, if an elative force is suggested— i.e., where no comparison is even hinted at—we

³⁴ Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 739.

³⁵ Heath R. Curtis, “A Female Apostle?: A Note Re-Examining the Work of Burer and Wallace Concerning Ἐπίσημος with ἐν and the Dative,” *Concordia Journal* 28, no. 4 (October 2002): 438, <https://search-ebscohost-com.utsdayton.idm.oclc.org/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rft&AN=ATLA0001451283&site=ehost-live>.

might expect ἐν + the dative. It should be noted that this is merely a working hypothesis, and one that is falsifiable.³⁶

Lucian, a second-century AD rhetorician, humorist, and philosopher, used ἐπίσημος with ἐν and the dative in an inclusive sense. Burer and Wallace rejected this inclusive method that Lucia uses. Burer says:

Lucianus thus shows the same patterns that we saw earlier, viz., an exclusive notion with ἐν plus the dative and inclusive notion with the genitive modifier. But he is not consistent with this. On at least one occasion his words unmistakably have an inclusive force for ἐν plus the dative. In his work *On Salaried Posts in Great House*, he offers advice to servants: "... you must raise your thirsty voice like a stranded frog, taking pains to be conspicuous among the claque and to lead the chorus" (ἐπίσημος ἔση ἐν τοῖς ἐπαίνοῦσί ... *Mere. Cond* 2.8 [sic]. This is the first parallel to *Rom. 16.7* we have seen that can offer real comfort to inclusivists. It is unmistakable, it is personal, and it is rare.³⁷

Looking at these two methods and concluding which one is the best method of translating ἐπίσημος with ἐν as inclusive or exclusive, Heath R. Curtis found that Burer and Wallace misquoted *Merc. Cond* 28 as *Merc. Cond* 2.8 and its grammatical usage to be unmistakable, personal, and rare. Heath R. Curtis says:

A closer examination of the context will show that far from being an exception to the rule *Mere, Cond. 28* agrees with the rest of the Greek corpus in its usage of ἐπίσημος with ἐν and the dative as an exclusive. It appears that Burer and Wallace may have been misled by the Loeb Classical Library (hereafter LCL) translation of this passage, which they quote here.³⁸

There is no doubt then that the best method to translate ἐπίσημος with ἐν is the exclusive ("well-known") method. Heath R. Curtis says:

Indeed, a case can be made for it, and Burer and Wallace seemed to have accepted it wholeheartedly. I believe; however, the better case is for an exclusivist reading. Considering the following: (1) it would seem an odd departure of Lucian to ἐν and

³⁶ K. Penner, "Ancient Names for Hebrew and Aramaic: A Case for Lexical Revision," *New Testament Studies* 65, no. 3 (2019): 412-423.

³⁷ Curtis, "A Female Apostle?," 438.

³⁸ Curtis, "A Female Apostle?," 439.

the dative to express inclusive sense with the genitive, which obviously denotes inclusivity, was easily available to him and used by him elsewhere; (2) Lucian stands in the tradition of Atticism and would have been loath to depart from standard grammar and display the inconsistency of which Burer and Wallace accuse him; and (3) the very work of Burer and Wallace is so comprehensive that if an exclusivist reading of ἐπίσημος with ἐν and the dative is possible and reasonable then it should be given the benefit of the doubt even if an inclusivist reading is also possible. At any rate, if this brief re-examination of Lucian has not proven that at Merc. Cond. 28 an “unmistakable” use of ἐν and the dative for exclusive sense. Therefore, the conclusion that Burer and Wallace reach regarding Romans 16:7 is only strengthened: “Thus Junia, along with Andronicus, is recognized by Paul as well known to the apostles, not as an outstanding member of the apostolic band.”³⁹

In summary, an examination of ἐπίσημος with both genitive modifiers and ἐν plus dative adjuncts revealed some surprising results. The genitive personal modifier was consistently used for an inclusive idea, while the (ἐν plus) dative personal adjunct was almost never so used. Yet to read the literature, one would get a decidedly different picture; say that this is simply not true. More accurately ἐπίσημοι ἐν τοῖς ἀποστόλοις almost certainly means “well-known to the apostles.” Thus, Paul recognizes Junia along with Andronicus as well-known to the apostles not as an outstanding member of the apostolic band. There is a broader implication to this study than simply Junia’s relation to the apostles: one has to wonder how such a great chasm could exist between the scholarly opinion about Romans 16:7 and what the data actually reveals. The founded opinions of a few great scholars of yesteryear were, frankly, canonized.

Summary

Throughout the Bible and within the church the role of women in ministry was an issue. The Bible is silent regarding the role of women in ministry. The Bible has a strong philosophical leaning that seems to not accommodate women in ministry. At the same

³⁹ Curtis, “A Female Apostle?,” 440.

time, a few women in the Bible have involvement in ministry. God did not create man and woman at the same time. God created Adam first and Eve, after some time, second to be Adam's helper. Eve was equal to Adam, but God gave her the role and responsibility of submitting to Adam. The disobedience of Adam and Eve found in Genesis 3:16–19 brought about certain consequences. For the woman, God pronounced a curse that included increased pain in childbirth and tension in the submission-to-authority relationship of husband and wife. Genesis 3:16 says the woman's "desire" will be for her husband but he shall "rule" over her.

Throughout the Old Testament, women had some role in the spiritual life of Israel, but commonly they were not leaders. Women like Deborah (Judg. chapter four) were undoubtedly the exception and not the rule. There is no record of a woman with a partial divinatory office or of women as priests. Israel never had a queen. No women wrote books in either the Old Testament or the New Testament. Isaiah 3:12 indicates that God allowed women to rule as part of God's judgment on the sinning nation. Women never took ongoing leadership positions in Israel or the church.

During Jesus's time, Jesus revealed love and admiration for women. The core of the Greek, Roman, and Jewish principles, which viewed women nearly on the level of property, excluded women from learning. The Jewish Talmud assumed it was better to burn the Torah than to teach it to a woman. However, Jesus by no means took the position about women's nature. He was friendly to them (Mt. 13:33; 22:1–2; 24:41; Lk. 15:8–10) and specifically applied his teaching to them (Mt. 10:34ff).

The New Testament also reveals the essential roles that women shared in the ministry of the early church. Contrary to the cultural norm of that time regarding the

status of women in society, the Apostle Paul frequently refers to the contributions made by women. For instance, Paul speaks of women who “worked hard with him” in the work of the gospel (Rom. 16:6, 12; Phil. 4:3).

Many theologians, lay church members (congregation), and church leaders try to come up with ideas about the role of women in ministry. The more they investigate the matter, the more confused the matter becomes. For many years, the role of women in ministry served as a source of debate, and as a source of division within certain churches. With the increasingly diverse operating contexts and the quest for improved ideas on this matter, non-biblically based speculations arise, which persons mostly based on human cultures. Analyzing Romans 16:1-7, where several women such as Phoebe, Priscilla, and Junia performed ministry, leads to the following conclusion: a woman can have a ministry. Apostle Paul encouraged women to do ministerial work in the first church. The kind of ministry they did was mostly evangelism; that of being a pastor. This is evident by the fact that Phoebe, Aquila, and Junia did not serve a physical church (temple); they served home churches or churches in their homes.

There is no clear evidence from the text to prove that Phoebe was a προστάτις (patroness) of the church. On the other hand, perhaps she was a wealthy woman who had authority and was a leader. Archeological evidence failed to find a church active in Kenchreia during the first century. Perhaps the church was a house church in Phoebe’s house. Due to her wealth and her authority, and since the church was in her house, she perhaps had some influence on the church. The same applies to Priscilla. Priscilla was in a full-time ministry since she founded a church and worked like any other minister during the time of the first church. This reflects involvement of women in ministry, and Paul is

not against it. Instead, he promotes it by calling Priscilla and Aquila to Rome to do more work, but her ministry was limited to house churches instead of a temple. For Junia, every time ἐπίσημος occurred with an ἐν and the personal dative, the sense was exclusive (well-known to) every time except once. This means that Junia was not among the apostles. She was well-known to the apostles. Junia's ministry was more of an evangelist than a pastor.

Learning these facts greatly helped this doctoral project. This project focuses on the role of women in ministry, and while exploring Romans 16:1–7 in the textual and biblical contexts, clearly the text limits women's roles regarding ministry. Paul's statement in 1 Corinthians 14:34 says: "Let your women keep silence in the churches, for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience as also saith the law" (1 Cor. 14:34). This was well-respected. None of these women found in Romans 16:1–7 spoke from a church pulpit.

CHAPTER THREE

HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS

Introduction

Does the possibility exist for a woman to be an ordained minister (pastor) or take the lead in a local church? Many Christians disagree when responding to this question. Some think women have important leadership responsibilities but cannot operate as ministers (pastors) or elders. Some think women should in no way operate in any leadership role. Others think the answer is some combination of these views. All use the Bible as the source of their convictions. One cannot consider the ministry of women apart from the overall purpose of the church, but today the purpose of the church is tricky. This causes many things to go in the wrong way regarding the mission of the church. Regarding the role of women in ministry, it seems there is more of human initiative in the matter. Elsie Gibson says:

The ministry of women cannot be considered apart from the total mission of the church, but today the mission of the church is itself problematic. Has this institution a divine origin? If it has, is God still taking the initiative in its life, or do human leaders, tracing what appears to be a thread of redemptive purpose through history, chart its course? To pose the question with special reference to the ordained ministry: does God call individuals and bestow gifts upon them, trusting the church to discern and ordain those thus endowed, or does the church choose and recruit clergy, hopefully petitioning God to empower them? If we narrow the question still further to the place of women in the church, we might ask does God call women to share the ministry with men, or do some women simply have vivid imaginations regarding their destiny?¹

¹ Elsie Gibson, *When the Minister Is a Woman* (New York, NY: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970), 1.

The position of women in ministry was a center of tension in the nineteenth century. After looking at this issue from a human point of view, as Elsie Gibson mentions in the above quote, many opinions and ideas emerged about women in ministry. Prior to this time, public silence prevailed among churches and clergy regarding women's roles in ministry. New facts concerning this matter emerged in the nineteenth century, and these facts created many challenges. Beverly Zink-Sawyer says: "The public silence of women was among the infallible matters most nineteenth-century Americans believed to be decreed in the Bible. That silence and its assumed ratification in Scripture began to be challenged by some brave women in the 1830s."² Looking deeply through the Bible one finds no clear answer regarding the position of women in ministry.

What makes it difficult is the use of the term submit in the New and Old Testaments. The New Testament uses the verb submit (ὑποτάσσομαι). The Bible is a historical document, and Bible authors wrote both the Old and the New Testaments within a specific historical context, which significantly affected their inspiration and their motive.

Truly understanding and drawing a positive conclusion regarding the role of women in ministry requires looking at the historical settings and historical arguments that influenced what the writers said in the Bible concerning the role of women in ministry. This project focuses on the historical background of the New Testament and discusses the historical position of the church regarding the role of women in ministry. This effort focuses on Romans 16:1–7 and 1 Timothy 2:8–15 as evidenced in the next few outlines.

² Beverly Zink-Sawyer, *From Preachers to Suffragists: Woman's Right and Religious Conviction in the Lives of Three Nineteenth-Century American Clergywomen* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003), 7.

Historical Background of the New Testament

Historically, persons wrote the New Testament in a context culturally dominated by several historical cultures and norms. These cultures and norms had a great influence on the New Testament. One of these cultures was that of the Ebionites—a strict Jewish Christian group culturally opposed to the involvement of women in ministry. R.T. France says:

There were, the church historians tell us, members of the Jerusalem church who were unpersuaded by this Pauline “liberalism,” and maintained a strictly Jewish Christian community, later known as the Ebionites, which continued for a time in opposition to the mainstream church but which has left no abiding mark in Christian history. No doubt the Ebionites were convinced that they alone had maintained the true biblical faith. But in fact, the word of God went forward not through their unchanging tradition but along new lines, equally based on Scripture, in the hands of those whose hermeneutic was sufficiently alert to recognize that faithfulness to biblical revelation need not, indeed cannot, be equated with resistance to change.³

Inside the scriptural record, one can detect a fading value of the woman’s place in the church that becomes more evident later in the New Testament. As previously mentioned, several historical facts (settings) and norms influenced the New Testament. These historical facts and norms are of great value because they will help in understanding why the Bible points out some ideas that seem not to fit in the context of today’s norms concerning women in ministry when seeking to apply it. Elsie Gibson says:

Actually what we know concerning women’s work in the churches during the first few centuries of the Christian era comes not from records of what they are permitted or expected to do, but from some theologian’s speculation or some council’s decision as to things they are no longer permitted to do.” Two points may help to explain the curtailment of women’s work. First, the influence of the culture, always subordinating women to men, was so pervasive that the church itself was almost inevitably affected. Christian teaching and living can only be

³ R. T. France, *Women in the Church’s Ministry: A Test Case for Biblical Interpretation* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997), 19.

maintained by constant re-orientation to the deeds and words of Jesus, along with an ever-recurring renewal and reformation.⁴

One of the great influencers of the New Testament, but missing through the course of history, were the Ebionites. The Ebionites were Jewish conservative Christians. Apostle Paul was aware of this group of Christians, who were dangerous radicals. The Ebionites observed many Jewish customs and practices while identifying as Christian. For a long time, they disagreed with the majority of the church, but their beliefs greatly influenced the church. They believed they alone had the true biblical faith. To clarify things, Paul found it necessary to argue at length from scripture (notably in Romans chapters nine through eleven) to defend the legitimacy of his Gentile mission, and to rebuke the Ebionites on some issues concerning the church.⁵

The Ebionites held the view that women had no authority before men, which is a belief they retained from Judaism. In other words, they were against the legitimacy of woman over man. This idea shaped the first-century church, and most Christians at that time agreed with it. Looking at this from another perspective, it is not reasonable to infer that those who support the involvement of women in ministry (ordination) build their claims purely on a few texts. In their argument, there are two broader questions to ponder. One question involves the entire subject of the path of the Bible's approach to women throughout the Old Testament, during the ministry of Jesus—particularly in light of the views observed in Jewish philosophy at the time—and into the apostolic church. One may allege that Galatians 3:28 is not an isolated liberationist text but sits atop a rising structure of contests to the patriarchal traditions of an earlier society. The other

⁴ Gibson, *When the Minister Is a Woman*, 11-12.

⁵ France, *Women in the Church's Ministry*, 19.

question is the much more essential hermeneutical concern of the shifting perspective of Christian discipleship. This creates the problem of whether one can simply presume that what was suitable and even essential in New Testament times is uniformly appropriate to current times and philosophy. Anna Howard Shaw says:

Paul's commands for women's silence were contained in letters addressed to specific churches. They were not given in a general sermon nor were they written, at least in the recorded Bible, to all his congregations. The particular circumstances of the churches which Paul sent his dictum were also crucial to grasping his meaning, because in those churches women were creating undue disturbances. Finally, she contended that the passage exhorting women to be silent was not to keep them from preaching but to keep them from interrupting preachers with questions, a common practice at the time. Shaw concluded that an absolute command for women's silence would be out of harmony with the rest of the Bible.⁶

To simplify, even though one can conclude that Paul prohibited women in Ephesus and Corinth from embracing leadership positions in the church, does this suggest that persons still cannot authorize women to be in ministry in our churches today? Indeed, if Apostle Paul wrote to the church of the twentieth century, would he say the same thing he said to the first-century church?⁷

Women in Pauline Churches

Apostle Paul needed to limit the enthusiasm and insensitivity of women in the churches of Corinth and Ephesus. This is important, since churches in which women realized they could anticipate no responsibility in leadership or public speaking would find such restrictions unexpected. Paul implemented some corrective action toward women who had unsuitable behavior, since they sensed the freedom to pray or prophesy.

⁶ Anna Howard Shaw, *Suffrage Orator and Social Reformer* (New York, NY: Greenwood Press, 1991), 25.

⁷ France, *Women in the Church's Ministry*, 22-23.

Paul recognizes this in 1 Corinthians 11:5. Additionally, Paul's letters suggest that in fact the role of women in the Christian churches had less limitations than the popular stereotype permits.

Paul's Women Coworkers—Romans 16:1–16

I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deacon of the church at Cenchreae, so that you may welcome her in the Lord as is fitting for the saints, and help her in whatever she may require from you, for she has been a benefactor of many and of myself as well. Greet Prisca and Aquila, who work with me in Christ Jesus, and who risked their necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. Greet also the church in their house. Greet my beloved Epaphroditus, who was the first convert in Asia for Christ. Greet Mary, who has worked very hard among you. Greet Andronicus and Junia, my relatives who were in prison with me; they are prominent among the apostles, and they were in Christ before I was. Greet Amplius, my beloved in the Lord. Greet Urbanus, our co-worker in Christ, and my beloved Stachys. Greet Apelles, who is approved in Christ. Greet those who belong to the family of Aristobulus. Greet my relative Herodion. Greet those in the Lord who belong to the family of Narcissus. Greet those workers in the Lord, Tryphaena and Tryphosa. Greet the beloved Persis, who has worked hard in the Lord. Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord; and greet his mother—a mother to me also. Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and the brothers and sisters who are with them. Greet Philologus, Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints who are with them. Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ greet you. (Holy Bible NRSV)

Apostle Paul tried to reprimand the Ebionites' ideas brought, but he failed to fully portray that woman can be in ministry like every other minister. Romans chapter sixteen reveals that Apostle Paul did integrate women into his ministry. He had female coworkers.

Historically the roles of these women in the Pauline church appear to have a great significance because, according to the history of the church of the first century, these women functioned as Paul's coworkers (συνεργοί). The Greek word *συνεργοί* is a word that Paul utilizes for other colleagues with crucial positions in the Christian mission. R.T. France says:

They are his συνεργοί ('co-workers'), a term he uses for other associates with a central role in the Christian mission, such as Timothy (Rom. 16:21), Titus (2 Cor. 8:23), and Epaphroditus (Phil. 2:25). Several other συνεργοί are named in Col. 4:10–11; Phm. 1:23–24, including such well-known names as Mark, Luke and Epaphras. That three women (Priscilla, Euadia and Syntyche, see above on Phil. 4:2–3) are among the named συνεργοί of Paul in the New Testament says much for the inclusion of women not only in the membership but in the active ministerial personnel of the apostolic church.⁸

The title designates these women as having a wider recognition and that, along with the men, they were at the forefront of missionary work and church leadership as Paul's coworkers. This means they were historically in ministry. Looking at the work these women did for the church as mentioned in Romans chapter sixteen, it seems that Apostle Paul wants to maintain that in Christ there is no male nor female. Galatians 3:28 demonstrates this. While some might suggest that Galatians 3:28 does not specifically mention ministry in the church, one can take its possible implications for such ministry into consideration. According to R.T. France:

Just as there are specific passages which forbid the authoritative or teaching role of women in the church, there are others which appear not only to allow but to encourage it. Even 1 Corinthians 11, at the same time as activity in praying and prophesying in the Church (in 14:34–35). Most notable is the remarkable sequence of references to women among Paul's co-workers in Romans 16, and the roles which they appear to have played in the Pauline churches. One of them, Priscilla (Prisca, Romans 16:3) meets us elsewhere in the New Testament, and it is an interesting question how her activities there recorded relate to the "headship" principle. A specific text often quoted in this connection is Paul's assertion that in Christ there is now no male and female. (Gal. 3.28).⁹

Some of these women did greater work than any other apostle or minister. For instance, allegedly Priscilla wrote the New Testament letter to the Hebrews but failed to receive credit as its author because she was a woman, and this is why no author is cited for the Book of Hebrews until now. Also, scholars suggest that Priscilla performed baptisms. If

⁸ France, *Women in the Church's Ministry*, 85-86.

⁹ France, *Women in the Church's Ministry*, 22.

this is true, women had responsibilities that were equal to men in the first church, but it was hidden because the culture and historical settings of the first-century church failed to accept women as equal to men. Elsie Gibson says:

The theory Priscilla wrote the New Testament letter to the Hebrews has been advanced by three scholars: Harnack, Harris and Peake. The source of this book has always been a mystery; in the year 225, Origen said, “Who wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews, only God knows.” This anonymity is so amazing that it is regarded as one of the hints suggesting female authorship.¹⁰

The New Testament mentions several other women with their abilities fluctuating from fashioning clothing for the poor (Acts 9:36ff) to prophesying. Generally, folks would explain prophecy as the expectation of future events, but the word prophecy has a larger implication in the New Testament. Prophecy can describe any inspired word spoken to the church. Luke, in Acts 21:9, cites four unmarried daughters of one family who prophesied. The fact that even during the first century that there is a record of women who prophesied means God uses anyone with whom God can work—regardless of gender.

Scholars continue to discuss the Pauline epistles. Some say that one should understand the Pauline epistles today exactly as written hundreds of years ago. Some scholars insist that one should not take Paul’s epistles literally, but instead interpreted as persons interpret all books published at that time—taking into account the circumstances under which they were uttered to include the conditions of society and the needs of the people.

¹⁰ Gibson, *When the Minister Is a Woman*, 8-9.

Who Started Ordaining Women?

Oberlin College—a liberal college in the United States—started the idea of ordaining women. Seminaries were closed to women less than hundred years ago. The Oberlin Collegiate Institute was the first coeducational, privately controlled, nondenominational school in the United States. Oberlin prided itself on its liberality and that it was a center for antislavery activities. Oberlin welcomed Black students and even saved a Black man from the police who wanted to return him to his owner. Oberlin's actions drew nationwide attention as it received punishment for its actions. Oberlin did not expect the length to which its liberality would go concerning women.

Antoinette Brown worked at Oberlin after completing college. She applied to join the seminary. Meeting after meeting took place to formulate ways of keeping her out, but the charter asserted that all privileges open to men were also open to women. After long discussion, the seminary admitted Brown because it was impossible to deny her application. She graduated in 1850 after many challenges, but listings of graduates did not list her with her male peers until years later. She preached her first sermon in her hometown of Henrietta, New York, and in 1853 was ordained a minister of the Congregational Church.¹¹ Several similar experiences occurred in several seminaries and churches, and with time it became a common practice for some churches.

The Church's Understanding of Women's Role in Ministry through the Centuries

According to a basic understanding of church history, women are viewed as substandard beings who endanger the veracity of men. Therefore, removing them from religious circles is easier than a costly search for understanding and cooperation in the

¹¹ Gibson, *When the Minister Is a Woman*, 18.

work of God. Since men are substantially stronger, the perception of woman's equality depends on a male's understanding of moral and spiritual principles.

Nevertheless, through men—in or out of the church—feminine goodness became well-known, and men helped them in their quests for spiritual development. Virgins and widows had opportunities for service as well as women who worked with their husbands in the early centuries. When political developments resulted in the empire adopting Christianity, monasticism sprang up to preserve the purity of faith. Elsie Gibson says:

Hilda, an Anglo-Saxon abbess, shows the place that could be held by women in the seventh century. A person of commanding appearance, wearing the flowing white robes and dark headdress of Christians in Bible times, for more than twenty years she was administrator, teacher and spiritual guide of the double monastery. Hilda had been brought up by Queen Ethelberga, whose father founded the See of Canterbury and whose mother established the first place of Christian worship there. Bishop Aidan of Iona asked Hilda's help, and in response she opened her first monastery. Her educational work included the training of the poet Caedmon and five English bishops (one of whom baptized Bede). While abbess, she presided over an important synod at Whitby in which the Roman dating of Easter was accepted with far-reaching effects. She died in 680 while urging her people to preserve harmony in the church.¹²

Involvement of women in missionary work and in reform movements disturbed the growth of Christian institutions as it continued. A Dominican laywoman named Catherine of Siena, who lived in the fourteenth century, received a call from God for active service and contemplation. She is known mainly for her endeavors to reestablish unity to the church. This was the time in church history when the papacy relocated to Avignon prior to the battle of a rival Pope's office. A woman of fine intelligence and disciplined prayer, Catherine was influential with two popes—Gregory XI and Urban VI. Elsie Gibson says:

Late one night, a story goes, when she was guest in the palace of a noblewoman at Genoa, Pope Gregory appeared at the door, dressed in the plain black cassock of a priest. Without identifying himself to the night watchman, he sent Catherine what appeared to be a priest's message, "My need is great. Admit me, in the name of

¹² Gibson, *When the Minister Is a Woman*, 12.

Jesus Christ.”...“Bring him to me at once,” Catherine replied. The pope had come to unburden his anxious concern to this woman who lived close to God and had insight into church problems. Gregory said that he left Catherine’s presence “Strengthened and edified.” Urban VI summoned her to Rome, before returning to the Vatican itself became possible, and asked her to speak to the assembled cardinals on the schism that was tearing the church apart. Her words moved him as they had moved his predecessor. When she had finished, Urban said, “Behold my brethren, how contemptible we are before God, when we give way to fear. This poor woman puts us to shame, whom I call so, not out of contempt, but by reason of the weakness of her sex, which should make her timid even if we were confident. It is she who now encourages us.”¹³

Another woman named Teresa of Avila, a contemporary of Martin Luther, strived to restore the Carmelite Order. She led a dynamic as well as thoughtful life, encountered disagreement with strong anti-reform forces in the church, but earned papal appreciation for her work reforming the Carmelites. With her administrative skill she applied a wonderful gift of teaching through her writings on prayer, which are still studied. According to Elsie Gibson, “An article, ‘Doctor of the Church,’ in The New Catholic Encyclopedia declares: ‘No women has been proclaimed [Doctor], although St. Teresa of Avila has popularly been given the title because of the influence of her teaching.’”¹⁴ This is evidence that women also had their place in ministry during the time of the Reformation.

Anne Hutchinson, the daughter of an Anglican minister, departed England with her spouse for the New World in 1634. The King James Version of the Bible was in readership less than a quarter of a century, and Anne was a passionate student of this version of the Bible. A few of her female acquaintances in New England requested her help in its comprehension, and a small study group began in her home. The meeting was so interesting that attendance increased, and clergymen became uncomfortable with this

¹³ Gibson, *When the Minister Is a Woman*, 14.

¹⁴ Gibson, *When the Minister Is a Woman*, 14.

gathering of females and took Anne to task. She used Titus 2:3-5, which exhorts older women to teach their younger sisters, for defense. She received no support from her fellow women to protect her from the clerics, who considered what she said intolerable. Anne faced real trouble. She was excommunicated, and her family was expelled from Massachusetts. Elsie Gibson says:

Even this did not give them rest, for they were overtaken by the uneasy feeling that she might damage her new neighbors; accordingly, they sent a delegation to demand of her husband, who was now a magistrate in Rhode Island, that he put a stop to her talk. He bluntly refused, saying, “I think her to be a dear saint and servant of God.”¹⁵

All these instances portray women who were called to perform church duties such as teaching, preaching, and organizing the work of the church all over the world; not replacing men but staying alongside them. They did this with no ordination, saving many souls for God. Is this not an indication that women should be incorporated in ministry like any other male minister?

View about Women in Ministry during Early Adventism

Sojourner Truth, a Black woman who became a remarkable speechmaker in the fight to oppose slavery, appeared in one of Miller’s sermons in 1842. Miller was a Baptist minister who was one of the pioneers of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. She was present at least two Adventist camp meetings but ended up saying that they were “laboring under delusion.”¹⁶ According to George R. Knight, “Female lecturers appear to have had a more prominent role than Blacks in Millerism. Not only was the Women’s

¹⁵ Gibson, *When the Minister Is a Woman*, 16.

¹⁶ George R. Knight, *Millennial Fever and the End of the World* (Boise, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1993), 118.

Rights Movement getting a major boost from female participation in abolitionism, but restorationism and the Second Great Awakening were also giving them the opportunities.”¹⁷

During this time there was a strong tradition about women preachers in the Christian context. There was the ministry of Phoebe Palmer, who revived the suitability of women conducting public worship in the Methodist practice. This influenced the Millerites. Nevertheless, female Millerite lecturers did not have an easy time. Lucy Maria Hersey, who converted when she was eighteen years old, believed the Lord summoned her to publicly preach the gospel. She agreed with Miller’s doctrine in 1842. Shortly after, she went with her father to Schenectady, New York, and at some point, a believer requested her non-clergy father to speak to a non-Adventist group on the testimony for his faith. The people did not agree with a female speaking. The host thought it best if the father made the presentation, but he was flabbergasted. The host found out later that Lucy’s father was not ready and that they suggested Lucy speak. They said, “Bro. Hersey has a daughter here who talks some in conference meetings when at home in N.E., and if there is no objection raised by any one present, we would like to hear from her.”¹⁸

There was no opposition, and she presented her message with a powerful outcome. The seminar was transferred to the courthouse because more space was needed, and she spoke to a full audience at the courthouse. That was the start of a productive ministry that incorporated the conversion of numerous men who admired and accepted the preaching of the Adventist message.

¹⁷ Knight, *Millennial Fever and the End of the World*, 118.

¹⁸ Knight, *Millennial Fever and the End of the World*, 120.

Another woman named Olive Maria Rice, converted to Millerism in 1842 and wanted to be a missionary since her childhood. She encountered more opposition than Lucy in her ministry. Nonetheless, she had more success afterward. She believed the Lord had something more for her to do than contributing to prayer meetings. In March 1843, she became a member of a public evangelistic ministry that converted hundreds of souls. Rice's ministry faced many biases. George R. Knight says:

One young New Yorker complained to his brother that he had recently had "to take another dose of Millerism, ... and that too from a woman who to all appearance would better be discharging her duty and more becoming the dignity of her sex in the private walks of life in the domesticated circle. "Some," he continued, "said the woman was an angel [;] others said if she once was an *angel*, she had fallen from her first estate." He went on to note that there were "a good many [sic] 'fellers' after her" and claimed that two of them had "flipped a cent to see which should go home with her the last *night*."¹⁹

Rice was aware of the disapproval of her preaching but stated that she "dare not stop for the only reason that I am a sister."²⁰ She said: "Though men may censure and condemn, I feel justified before God, and expect with joy to render my account for thus warning my fellow being."²¹

A woman preacher named Elvira Fassett broke through both her own and her husband's prejudices against women preachers. Like most of the women of her day, she was taught that it was improper for women to speak in public, and considered it prohibited by Paul. This view did not change her mind, and she continued to preach and find that the Lord blessed her labors. The good result of her ministry of preaching and by the prophecy of Joel chapter two and Acts chapter two overcame her husband's

¹⁹ Knight, *Millennial Fever and the End of the World*, 120.

²⁰ Knight, *Millennial Fever and the End of the World*, 120.

²¹ Knight, *Millennial Fever and the End of the World*, 120.

prejudices. More women preaching the advent near were Sarah J. Paine, Emily C. Clemons, and Clorinda S. Minor. They also edited a journal meant mainly for women. The first issue of the *Advent Message to the Daughters of Zion* came off the press in May 1844.

This is how persons viewed women during early Adventism. The Adventist Church failed to be in favor of women in ministry since the early days of Adventism and even today this is the standard. In 1881, Ellen White pushed for women's involvement in higher learning, medicine, and ministry, and a proposal calling for women's ordination was first presented at the General Conference. Persons discussed this proposal to the committee but failed to ever vote on it. Women ran departments at Adventist educational, healthcare, and other organizations in the early years of the movement, but their numbers dropped after Ellen White's death in 1915, and by 1950 women disappeared from all department management ranks. With the growth of the Feminist Movement, the General Conference dubbed for the research of the women's ordination issue by at least 1968. From 1968 to today (approximately a half century), the General Conference attempted to carve out an agreement about women's ordination by constantly examining the issue and incrementally permitting women to carry out pastoral tasks without ordination.²²

Seventh-day Adventist Church's Views of Women in Ministry Today

In 1990 and 1995, the General Conference voted in opposition to women's ordination; however, the General Conference Working Policy asserts that "decisions regarding the ordination of ministers are entrusted to the union conference/mission." In

²² Laura Vance, "Rejecting Women's Ordination: The 60th General Conference Session of the Seventh-day Adventist World Church," *Nova Religio* 21, no. 1 (2017): 86, *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/26417758.

several situations since the 1970s, conferences and unions sympathetic to women's ordination authorized women to perform baptisms and marriages and engage in other work normally set aside for ordained pastors. To solve this problem, the General Conference developed a two-tiered organization of pastoral credentialing that allows for the "commissioning" of non-ordained Adventist women to do most of the tasks customarily set aside for male pastors. Nevertheless, some responsibilities such as working in administrative positions that require ordination, are still exclusively reserved for men.²³

From July 2–11, 2015, the Seventh-day Adventist Church held its Sixtieth General Conference Session in Saint Antonio, Texas. One of the matters discussed, and which shook the church during this session, was the issue of women's ordination (the integration of women in ministry). This matter attracted lots of discussions and many persons aired their views concerning this matter. There were 65,000 to 70,000 Adventists gathered at the session. Delegates from local churches came to discuss and vote for this matter, some favored women's ordination and some disapproved.

Delegates on both sides maintained that their views were according to biblical and Ellen White's writings. They discussed whether ordaining women was suitable to the culture of the church and whether it could be a part of the culture. Both groups of delegates indicated that a vote in opposition to their position would destabilize church unity. In defending biblical support for a "no" vote, they mentioned how God is unchanging, the evidence that Jesus never ordained women, and the fact that Ellen White was never ordained (White said she was "ordained by God" and carried typical Adventist ministerial credentials). Opponents of this view pointed to biblical passages advocating

²³ Vance, "Rejecting Women's Ordination," 87, www.jstor.org/stable/26417758.

inclusivity to argue that the “Holy Spirit gives to both men and women without regard to gender.” They also employed Ellen White’s writings, such as her repeated calls for both men and women to become pastors to the flock of God. They described the effort to ordain women as a defeat of the culture, and some advocated that women’s ordination would contribute to a breakdown of gender roles. For example, one person stated that there are two distinct methods of interpreting scripture: one biblical and the other cultural, and one can connect the latter with advocates of women’s ordination.²⁴ Butler adds:

Delegate Doug Batchelor, president of Amazing Facts ministry and a popular Adventist televangelist, connected women’s ordination explicitly to homosexuality. Invoking “same-sex marriage” and “transgender bathrooms,” Batchelor called “our culture” “awash in gender confusion” and warned that “this is no time for us to get fuzzy about ... what the differences are between men and women.” A point of order noted that homosexuality was not germane to the motion, and delegates who followed Batchelor cited a more general “divine order” “with special roles for both” women and men. Opponents posited that the breakdown of gender distinctions via ordination of women was the first step on a slippery slope toward other “undesirable and unethical decisions.” Interestingly, supporters generally accepted the assertion that to ordain women was consistent with cultural changes, especially in Europe and North America, and failed to assert that opposition to women’s ordination might also be informed by “culture.”²⁵

The conference conducted a vote after all this debate and after the vote some delegates were not pleased and wanted to continue the debate. Pastor Ted Wilson, the new reelected General Conference president, requested that persons end the debate and adhere to the vote. Despite Wilson’s requests, the women’s ordination discussion continues in Adventism. President Wilson advised all to obey the result of the vote, and requested each division clarify in what way it would respond to the vote. However, soon after, the

²⁴ Vance, “Rejecting Women’s Ordination,” 95, www.jstor.org/stable/26417758.

²⁵ Vance, “Rejecting Women’s Ordination,” 95, www.jstor.org/stable/26417758.

Netherlands Union of Churches declared it would continue to ordain women. By August 2015, the General Conference Secretariat, in charge of supervising General Conference Working Policy, crafted a document stipulating that the church's policies and practices do not allow for the ordination of women.

However, some areas, such as the Columbia Union Conference and the Pacific Union Conference, continue to ordain women. Leaders in Norway, Denmark, Sweden, and the Belgian-Luxemburg Conference voted to stop the practice of clergy ordination altogether, in the wake of the vote against ordaining women pastors. By autumn of 2015, leading male Adventist pastors and seminary faculty began to exchange their ordination credentials for commissioned credentials to express support for non-ordained women. At the 2016 Annual Council meeting of the General Conference, leaders voted to endorse procedures designed to enforce compliance with General Conference's policy on women's ordination. Entitled "Unity in Mission: Procedures in Church Reconciliation," General Conference leaders began to implement those procedures in January 2017. That process continues at the time of this writing.²⁶

Conclusion

The issue about the role of women in ministry brought a great deal of disagreement within the church. There are those who think women have important leadership responsibilities but cannot operate as ministers (pastors) or elders. Some think women should in no way operate in any leadership role. Others support some mixture of these ideas. All use the Bible as the source of their convictions. One cannot consider the

²⁶ Vance, "Rejecting Women's Ordination," 98, www.jstor.org/stable/26417758.

ministry of women apart from the overall purpose of the church, but today the purpose of the church is tricky, and this confuses many things in regard to the mission of the church.

Historically, the authors of the New Testament wrote in a context culturally dominated by several historical cultures and norms. These cultures and norms had a great influence on the New Testament. One of these cultures was that of the Ebionites—a strict Jewish Christian group that was culturally opposed to the involvement of women in ministry. The Ebionites held the view that women had no authority before men, which is a belief they retained from Judaism.

In other words, they were against the legitimacy of woman before man. This idea shaped the first-century church, and most of the Christians at that time agreed with it. Looking at this from another perspective, it is not reasonable to infer that those who support the involvement of women in ministry (ordination) build their claim purely on a few texts. In their argument, there are two broader questions to ponder. One question is the entire subject of the path of the Bible's approach to women throughout the Old Testament, the ministry of Jesus (particularly in the light of the views observed in Jewish philosophy at the time), and into the apostolic church. One may allege that Galatians 3:28 is not an isolated liberationist text but sits atop of a rising structure of contests to the patriarchal traditions of an earlier society. The other question is the much more essential hermeneutical concern of the shifting perspective of Christian discipleship. This creates the problem of whether one can presume that what was suitable and even essential in New Testament times is uniformly appropriate to these very different times and philosophy. Anna Howard Shaw says:

Paul's commands for women's silence were contained in letters addressed to specific churches. They were not given in a general sermon nor were they written,

at least in the recorded Bible, to all his congregations. The particular circumstances of the churches which Paul sent his dictum were also crucial to grasping his meaning, because in those churches women were creating undue disturbances. Finally, she contended that the passage exhorting women to be silent was not to keep them from preaching but to keep them from interrupting preachers with questions, a common practice at the time. Shaw concluded that an absolute command for women's silence would be out of harmony with the rest of the Bible.²⁷

Apostle Paul tried to reprimand the ideas the Ebionites brought, but he failed to fully portray that woman can be in ministry like every other minister. Romans chapter sixteen shows that Apostle Paul did integrate women in his ministry. He had female coworkers. Historically the roles of these women in the Pauline church appear to have a great significance because, according to the history of the church of the first century, these women functioned as Paul's coworkers (συνεργοί). The Greek word συνεργοί is a word that Paul utilizes for other colleagues with crucial positions in the Christian mission.

The Adventist Church historically held in disfavor the idea of women in ministry since the days of early Adventism, and even today this is still the standard in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. On July 8, 2015, the Seventh-day Adventist Church voted "no" to women's ordination during the Sixtieth General Conference. Persons aired lots of debates, and some in the church failed to agree with the vote and continue to ordain women. Some stopped ordaining both men and women.

²⁷ Shaw, *Suffrage Orator and Social Reformer*, 25.

CHAPTER FOUR

THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

Introduction

The role of women in ministry brought lots of problems. Various theological disciplines studied this issue. These disciplines brought great ideas concerning the role of women in ministry. There is no physical information about the role of women in ministry in the Bible, but one sees in the Bible a strong philosophy that seems to not accommodate women in ministry. The Bible depicts few women who have involvement in ministry.

The fact that there is no physical information about women in ministry and yet few depictions of women's involvement in ministry in the Bible creates a great deal of uncertainty that is hard to resolve with a clear conclusion. Challenges always existed when persons tried to reach an agreement on the subject.

This chapter analyzes what should be the role of women in ministry using Womanist Theology as a tool of analysis. One source defines the term by stating that Womanist Theology is a religious conceptual framework which reconsiders and revises the traditions, practices, scriptures, and biblical interpretation with a special lens to empower and liberate African American women in America. Womanist Theology uses archaic (traditional) religious linguistics and emblems, and fashions them into a modern (more diverse and complex) connotation.

One cannot label this kind of theological thought as “womanist” just because the focus is Black women’s spiritual experiences. The crucial point for Womanist Theology is the use of a formal assessment that engages rank, gender, and race. This form of study is both informative (an analysis and sociohistorical perspective of Black life and Black religious worldviews) and dogmatic (offering suggestions for the eradication of oppression in the lives of African Americans and, by extension, the rest of humanity and creation).

For the most part, womanist theologians were Protestant Christian, while Roman Catholic influences were resilient from its beginning. Emilie M. Townes suggests that “This is changing as the influence of Santería, Yoruba, Vodun and other African, Afro-Caribbean, and Afro-Brazilian religions begin to make an impact on womanist theological discourse.”¹ As a scholarly concept, Womanist Theology focuses on the weaknesses of Black Theology and Feminist Theology. In its earliest times, Black Theology displayed a reluctance to deal with sexism and classism. Feminist Theology habitually reduced the range of women’s experiences to those of White, middle-class women, which—womanist theologians point out—does not address racism or classism. Womanist Theology also addresses conscious and unconscious homophobia in theological discourse.

This chapter explains the Womanist Theology and its roots, which originated as many womanists suggest—as a corrective to Black Liberation Theology. While explaining the roots of Womanist Theology, this chapter explores the womanist’s view of ministry. For Womanist Theology, one acknowledges and confirms ministry through the

¹ Emilie M. Townes, “Womanist Theology,” 160, [https://ir.vanderbilt.edu/bitstream/handle/1803/8226/Townes-Womanist Theology.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y](https://ir.vanderbilt.edu/bitstream/handle/1803/8226/Townes-Womanist%20Theology.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y).

call that everyone receives through baptism in Christ Jesus. This chapter analyzes this view and provides an opinion about it. After this, this foundation discusses how Womanist Theology looks at the layperson and which authority empowers the layperson according to Womanist Theology. Womanist Theology uses Mark 11:28 to answer the question of which authority empowers the layperson. This chapter then provides an analysis of this view, and this view leads to a discussion of Womanist Theology's various views of Christian temperament in nineteenth-century African American women's narratives. This chapter then points out the few testimonies of women who succeeded in their ministries although undermined because of gender. Secondary to this, this foundation discusses a journal entitled "And Your Daughters Shall Prophecy," which was the title of the first public speech made by Maria Stewart—a womanist theologian—between 1832 and 1833. This leads to a discussion about some Womanist Theology literature and views about clergywomen.

Womanist Theology's View of Ministry

As mentioned in the introduction, Womanist Theology is a recent development that focuses on the religious experiences of African Americans. For Womanist Theology, one acknowledges and confirms ministry through the call that one receives through baptism in Christ Jesus. God's authority that anoints everyone who accepts Jesus through baptism enables them to teach, preach, prophecy, and minister in many diverse aspects to one another and to the church. The source of this affirmation is not new but resides in the earliest history of Christianity. As it evolved from a small Jewish sect of the marginalized to a religion that spread throughout the known world, in keeping with Jesus' command to

those who followed him to “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit” (Mt. 28:19). For as he proclaimed, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me” (Mt. 28:18).

Analyzing the above ideas, clearly in Womanist Theology ministry is not limited based on gender. Accepting Jesus through baptism is the door to ministry. Therefore, every baptized Christian is a minister who oversees the spreading of the word of God. This idea seems to be very weak when looking at the concept of ministry in the Bible, especially from the Old Testament priestly lineage of the Levites. However, if one only takes the New Testament as the basis of a ministry model, the above idea somehow makes sense.

Womanist Theology has several aspects in its composition. First it has a religious value, and secondly it has involvement with political issues. This is because it spoke up for the freedom of African Americans. While advocating for the freedom of African Americans, Womanist Theology fails to portray racism in the same way as Feminist Theology. Monica A. Coleman says:

The early articulation of “womanist” and “womanism” are joined in their desire to differentiate themselves from a largely white feminist movement, as well as from those who identify as black feminists. At the risk of being reductionist, the critiques can be summarized in the following ways: feminism is often critiqued for being racist and classist with an implied “white and middle-class” positionality in all its activities. Black feminist is critiqued for having a singular focus or privileging gender issues, within the multiple oppressions that black women experience. Both “white” feminism and black feminism are charged as being separatist from men. Some womanists also critique and resist feminism’s association with same-gender-loving women.²

² Monica A. Coleman, *Ain’t I a Womanist Too?: Third-Wave Womanist Religious Thought* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2013), 5.

Feminism, Black feminism, and womanism all progressed significantly since the 1980s. Countless analyses addressed the development and modification of each movement. Yet the terms Black feminism and womanism imply diverse academic and political outlines.

Monica A. Coleman says:

What seems central to these conversations is that “womanism” signifies a kind of self-naming. Alice Walker indicates that she chose the word “womanism” (over “black feminist”) because there “was more room in it for change,” and it was “more reflective of Black women’s culture, especially Southern culture.” She liked “the feel, the fit, the sound” of the word. Likewise, Floyd-Thomas connects womanism with Sojourner Truth around the issue of naming: “More than a century and a half after Isabella Baumfree changed her name to Sojourner Truth, a small cadre of Black female scholars of religion claimed a similar power of naming and called themselves womanists.”³

The integration of several disciplines such as politics and some other disciplined mixed with religion leaves Womanist Theology open to a great deal of arguments and many views about ministry. One can analyze this from the perspective of Womanist Theology’s view that there is no male or female in Jesus Christ; all are equal and can have involvement in ministry.

Seeing Ministry with New Eyes

Womanist Theology looks at the essence of authority that empowers laypersons and ministers in doing ministry. Womanist Theology starts by pointing out that most of the time laypersons asks themselves which authority permits them to speak out in the church on issues that concern the entire church. They turn to the Gospel of Mark to answer this question. Mark addressed this issue to Jesus approximately two thousand years ago. The chief priests, the scribes, and the elders asked Jesus, “By what authority are you doing these things” (Mk. 11:28). Ministers and laypersons who speak out in the

³ Coleman, *Ain’t I a Womanist Too?*, 6.

church on issues that concern the entire church continue to repeatedly ask this same question. They asked, “By what authority do you as non-ordained persons who hold no ecclesial office claim to minister in the name of the church, to preach, to teach, to prophesy, and to evangelize?” Jesus answered the priest, scribes, and elders with a personal query because due to their lack of awareness and fear, they were incapable of answering.⁴

In response to this question, Womanist Theology recalls that persons must recognize and affirm that God called Christians, as the people of God, to ministry through their baptism in Jesus Christ. They teach, preach, and prophesy by the authority with which God anointed them at baptism, and ministered in many ways to one another and to their churches.

The above point of view makes sense if considering ministry in general. Jesus chose twelve disciples to be with him. That means that selection is involved in choosing those who work full-time in ministry. Baptism can be an opening to ministry but not really the authority that is anointed for a full-time ministry. Getting baptized and being in a full-time ministry are two different things

Womanist Theology uses the Great Commission found in Matthew 28:18-19 as a source of this affirmation. Jesus states “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Mt. 28:19). For as he proclaimed: “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me” (Mt. 28:18). For Womanist Theology, this mandate is a cornerstone of the church’s tradition since its very beginnings. Such a renewed understanding then serves as a

⁴ Diana L. Hayes, *Standing in the Shoes My Mother Made: A Womanist Theology* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2011), 74.

blueprint for discerning and confirming one's own journey and the conversion process that is a constant, repeated aspect of it.⁵

These arguments from Womanist Theology makes it clear that ministry starts at baptism, and anyone baptized—either male or female—received a mandate to minister and perform ministry in every capacity. For them ministry does not start at ordination or from a call to ministry as most ministers say was the motif of their integration into ministry.

In analyzing this ideology, one can say that Womanist Theology is right in the sense that it points out authority but not a doctrine. There is a difference between authority and doctrine. In Roman Catholic Theology, the church doctrine includes ministry. That is why it developed a full doctrine on ministry and why persons believe that full-time ministry belongs only to men, as the order of Melchizedek.

Further thought on the origin of the church and ministry according to Womanist Theology points to Jesus. For Womanist Theology, Christianity sprang from the mind of Jesus and those who first believed in and followed him. Diana L. Hayes says:

Jesus upon his ascension into heaven did not leave behind a fully formed institutional structure with a priestly hierarchy in charge. He left behind a group of somewhat confused but faith-filled men and women unsure of their futures or their mission, knowing only that they had been promised the spirit of God who would guide them. But the movement of the spirit had to be discerned by those who believed in Jesus as the Son of God, and that discernment was often a difficult and unclear process that involved both the minds and the souls of those attempting to understand and to follow God's will.⁶

By pointing at Jesus as origin of the church and ministry, Womanist Theology fails to look at the Old Testament structure of ministry. For them Jesus is the basis for

⁵ Hayes, *Standing in the Shoes My Mother Made*, 76.

⁶ Hayes, *Standing in the Shoes My Mother Made*, 76.

everything. They see a new model of church and ministry that Jesus fashioned when he was on earth and when he left the earth. They say that the church (ministry) is a group of somewhat confused but faith-filled men and women unsure of their future or their mission. Jesus left no ecclesiastical hierarchy. Diana L. Hayes says:

It is a reflection, especially at its origin, of the myriad fold who first believed and then followed the Christ: Jew, Greek, Africa, and so many others, Jesus, upon his ascension into heaven, did not leave behind a fully formed institutional structure with a priestly hierarchy in charge. He left behind a group of somewhat confused but faith-filled men and women unsure of their futures or their mission, knowing only that they had been promised the spirit of God who would guide them. But the movement of the spirit had to be discernment was often a difficult and unclear process that involved both the mind and the souls of those attempting to understand and to follow God's will.⁷

Womanist Theology also looks at extra-biblical materials when building arguments about how ministry should be in today's context. It takes into consideration the stories, prayers, and sayings that persons orally passed down and ultimately gathered with other writings. These stories and prayers in Paul's letters (and in other letters passed down orally from the first church), try to theologically interpret Jesus's command for his people. Womanist theologians are aware that they must be careful with their interpretations of these extra-biblical materials. Interpreting those materials requires the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Diana L. Hayes says:

These writings required still further interpretation, acquired through constant debate, dialogue, and discussion down through the ages. This understanding is in keeping with the Pontifical Biblical commission's own statement that the Bible must be reinterpreted by every generation in keeping with its own particular context and culture. Thus, the understanding of ministry is one that has developed over the centuries waxing and waning according to the needs and understandings of those doing ministry and guided by the Holy Spirit who inspires and helps our perception of the ongoing revelation of God.⁸

⁷ Hayes, *Standing in the Shoes My Mother Made*, 76.

⁸ Hayes, *Standing in the Shoes My Mother Made*, 76-77.

For Womanist Theology, the word ministry conveys with it an obligation to help others and be open to their needs according to the Greek and Latin origins of the word. Ministry has nothing to do with power nor authority but rather with meekness and kindness. For womanist theologians, every Christian and all people who believe in God see themselves as anointed ones who God chose to serve all of God's creation.

These ideas result in Womanist Theology concluding that Jesus Christ is the origin of ministry. Jesus called male and female to partake in his work as well as in the theology Paul sets forth in his letters. Diana L. Hayes says:

Ministry can, therefore, be seen to have its origins in the ministry of Jesus the Christ, who called others, male and female, to participate in his mission as well as in the theology set forth by Paul in his letters. These letters affirm that all the baptized are called and commissioned to continue Christ's mission. That mission, to spread the good news of the coming of the kingdom of God within our midst, was one given to both men and women.⁹

Womanist Theology takes the story of several women to defend its position about women in ministry beginning with the story of Mary Magdalene. Jesus assigned Mary Magdalene the task of telling his brothers who hid in the upper room of the historic news that Jesus rose from the dead, overcame the chains of death, and goes before them back to Galilee. Secondly, there was a nameless woman who prefigured both Jesus's death and resurrection by her actions of anointing him. Mark's gospel states that "She has done what she could; she has anointed my body beforehand for its burial. Truly I tell you, wherever the good news is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in remembrance of her" (Mk. 14:8-9).

⁹ Hayes, *Standing in the Shoes My Mother Made*, 77.

Womanist Theology Views of Christian Temperament in Nineteenth-Century African American Women's Narratives

There were several challenging questions about Christianity in nineteenth-century Black women narratives. Womanist Theology asks the question:

Why were the practices of exhorting and preaching so important to some Black Women? How effective were they in a male-dominated, racist, slaveholding society? Could these women correctly be called radicals? Could these women correctly be called radicals? If not, precisely what were their motives and goals?¹⁰

To answer these questions, Rosemary Radford, editor of *Women and Religion in America*, relates that:

The obvious countenance of Christianity and religiosity by nineteenth-century women, both black and white, was a heritage from the Puritan and Wesleyan traditions, religious activities of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Throughout these areas, the religious descriptions of women were everchanging. Women happened to be seen as the more obviously devout gender, who had to take the crucial obligation in the home for evangelizing their children and supporting their husbands from the irreligious and immoral influences of the world...The home and the female sphere became the place of religion, while the world become the realm of non-religion.¹¹

Regarding spirituality and religion, women ranked highly, whereas in matters relating to church administration, they did not. This is an observation by Reuther and Keller.

Women started to challenge men and compete for more acknowledgment and acceptance in nondomestic areas—principally over the church and its clerical government.

Therefore, women in nineteenth-century America would progressively claim the right to preach.

Black women commenced to request social equality and opportunities to contribute to the administration of the church. They, too, recognized the

¹⁰ Jacquelyn Grant, *Perspectives on Womanist Theology*, vol. 7, *Black Church Scholars Series* (Atlanta, GA: ITC Press, 1995), 25.

¹¹ Grant, *Perspectives on Womanist Theology*, 26.

interconnectedness of church, administration, and authority. If women continually wished to be known in roles other than wife, mother, and subordinate, then the church would have to be the utmost initial opinion. Clearly from the above idea, in the nineteenth century, persons could not view women as simple housewives anymore. Women are aware that they too can perform duties that males do, and this idea breaks the thinking that women cannot be in full-time ministry.

And Your Daughters Shall Prophecy

The first public speeches by an African American woman were between 1832 and 1833. Maria Stewart's speech was one of the outstanding speeches that made a remarkable contribution for the start and development of Womanist Theology. She made a speech entitled "And Your Daughters Shall Prophecy" that she wrote as an essay. Porter notes that "Maria Stewart wrote an essay that has been neglected by historians and bibliographers."¹²

The issues discussed in this essay include theodicy. Maria Stewart briefly identifies the issue of human suffering. She elaborated on the role of women in social transformation regarding human suffering. This was a big boom for Womanist Theology. This essay also discussed the improvement of life options for African Americans. Maria Stewart assumed that the moral and intellectual situation of the "sable race" was the main issue in the development of life options for African Americans.¹³

¹² Dorothy B. Porter, "The Organized Educational Activities of Negro Literary Societies, 1826–1846," *Journal of Negro Education* 5 (1936): 569.

¹³ Marilyn Richardson, ed., *Maria W. Stewart: America's First Black Woman Political Writer* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1987), 19.

She defended the moral and intellectual capability of Blacks. Maria Stewart indicated that African Americans possibly will be helpful in breaking up false beliefs about the moral and intellectual ability of Blacks. She stated that most of the accountability for the improvement of African Americans rests upon the shoulders of African American women. Stewart, granting tone to Black women's skills and views, asserted their active role in society. In her social gospel—contrasting the expression of numerous Black male activists—she recognized the importance of Black women's roles and found a unique role for them that contributed to the emerging collective Black female consciousness. Stewart raises this understanding of Black women and their role in the Black community by exploring suffering in relationship to the ramification of the “cult of true womanhood” so prominent in this period. It appears logical that Stewart would explore the seeming paradox of divine justice and human suffering in light of her own personal experience and the plight of the Black community.¹⁴

Maria Stewart was born in Hartford, Connecticut in 1803. She became an orphan at the age of five and a religious family took care of her for the next ten years. She earned a religious and academic education throughout her years with the clergyman and his family. Similar to numerous African Americans, after ten years with this family, she worked as a domestic to provide for her basic needs. At the age of twenty-six, she married businessman James W. Stewart, who died three years later, marking a turning point in Maria Stewart's life. Concerning this tragic occurrence and the larger life issues it raised, Stewart says:

O, my soul, forget not that awful scene; forget not that awful moment. Come all ye that pass by and see if there is any sorrow like unto my sorrow. And what gratification will it be to you, my friends, to think that you have been able to be

¹⁴ Grant, *Perspectives on Womanist Theology*, 60.

decked in fine linen and purple, and to fare sumptuously every day, if you are not decked in the pure robes of Christ's righteousness? And friends what are they in that awful moment, if the eternal God is not your friend and portion?¹⁵

With this spiritual conversion, Maria Stewart started a ministry that she believed God ordained and sanctioned. As part of this experience and in keeping with the practice of the "Black Jeremiad," Maria Stewart taught in Boston thereby expanding her religious and political message. Even though she completed her public teaching career in Boston on a negative note—in part owing to inadequate treatment—she failed to abandon her dedication to the development of Black women and men. The words of Black women who have mounted pulpits, podiums, and lecterns to share their visions constantly reaffirm her desire for social change and renewal.

The above story demonstrates that one can do ministry with perseverance and prayer. Marie Stewart had a ministry that was successful because of her faith. Womanist Theology uses the story of Marie Stewart as an example of how a woman can have a ministry. This clearly shows God working through a woman in the nineteenth century to have a successful ministry, and indeed Maria Stewart's ministry was very successful and brought many changes to social, political, and religious matters.

Theology and Literacy of Womanist Theology

In the social examination of African American literature, the literary critic and the theologian play parts that are, on one occasion, corresponding and circular. Logically, they work with the same material—African American culture and society—with all the difficulties and eccentricities indicative of an odd record in the United States. Therefore, one can anticipate that the sharing of visions between the two disciplines would intensify

¹⁵ Richardson, *Maria W. Stewart*, 116.

and explain the badly needed core analysis that is the obligation of scholars of Black culture.

The critics of African American literacy scrutinize the text of the culture—be it literature, oratory, or an event—to interpret the content and convert it in language, structure, style, and context by asking “What does this text really say to us? What does it not say?”¹⁶ The theologian uses the same material and studies its content for matters of meaning and ultimate significance, and asks “What does the text really mean for my life? What does it imply about my humanity, as one made and formed in the image of God?”¹⁷

This makes the method circular as theologians and literary critics scrutinize one another’s work, with each reading producing new readings, and all raising queries about the significance of African American life. Grant writes that “A major contribution of Black-Womanist scholars’ Theology and Literacy Criticism has been to sensitize both literacy and theological communities to the complexity of issues confronting and affecting the African American.”¹⁸

Womanist Theology points to race as a central category in the American theological enterprise. In *White Women’s Christ and Black Women’s Jesus*, this idea describes the many ways in which slavery, segregation between Black and White people’s experience in general, and their experience in particular, from the beginning of the historical Black presence in the United States.¹⁹ Womanist Theology primarily studies a breakdown of Protestant systematic theologies to expose them as fundamentally racist

¹⁶ Grant, *Perspectives on Womanist Theology*, 115.

¹⁷ Grant, *Perspectives on Womanist Theology*, 115.

¹⁸ Grant, *Perspectives on Womanist Theology*, 116.

¹⁹ Jacquelyn Grant, *White Women’s Christ and Black Women’s Jesus: Feminist Christology and Womanist Response* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1989), 6.

surveys into the form and identity of the Christ. The authors of these Western, White, male-articulated theologies claimed to be objective and universal. However, they disregarded the historical, social, and economic context out of which their thought evolved.

Here, admiration for the meticulousness of race becomes an utter criterion for theological dialogue within the community of Christian women thinkers. Womanist Theology affirms Black women's right to define and articulate their own needs, concerns, and values within the feminist community. The implied pressure between race and gender is both suggestive and appropriate—particularly since the connection between them in the African America community remains an awkward one indeed.

The dangerous feminist standpoint scrutinizes the characters and purposes of women in culture and society, questioning metaphors and structures of patriarchy as tools of women's subjugation. Grant states that "In the aftermath of the 'Women's Lib' movement of the 60s and 70s, the Women's Movement has become a permanent fixture received, as a rule, in African American culture, where the historical tendency has been to subordinate gender to race in relationships both within and outside the Black Community."²⁰

Womanist Theology Views of Clergywomen

The controversy surrounding clergywomen and their need to tell the story of their identities and how they came to be that way is not new to the Black church. Women—equally acquainted with the Bible as men—knew the scriptures that admonished them to be silent in church (1 Tm. 2:11–14:1; 1 Cor. 14:34–45). However, they also knew about a

²⁰ Grant, *Perspectives on Womanist Theology*, 119.

special promise to women God makes through the prophet Joel who writes “And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy...and upon the handmaidens in those days will I pour out my spirit” (Jl. 2:28–29).

Womanist Theology uses this verse as the basis of its defense when it come to the question of clergywomen. Jarena Lee, a womanist theologian, “as having presented the first ordination challenge to the Black Church, used this scripture to strengthen the story of her call to participate in the ministry of the African Methodist Episcopal Church in a four-part narrative, written by herself.”²¹ Another womanist theologian named Wesley also wrote about clergywomen. She tried to find ways to evade the Methodist Church’s exclusions of women’s preaching. Wesley said:

In public you may properly enough intermix short exhortations with prayer: but keep as far from what is called preaching as you can: therefore never take a text; never speak in a continued discourse without some break, about four or five minutes. Tell the people, we shall have another prayer-meeting at such a time and place.²²

As Wesley observed remarkable progress at the hands of these women and other lay ministers, he decided to allow lay preaching by reason of the amazing call of God. This was one of the highly traditionally important steps for women in ministry. Since the call to ministry was a profound personal experience, certainly no one could contest the authenticity of God’s special revelation to any individual. Women, as well as men, created history that legitimized their calls. Womanist Theology holds the view that

²¹ Grant, *Perspectives on Womanist Theology*, 214.

²² Carolyn De Swarte Gifford, ed., *The Defense of Women’s Rights to Ordination in the Methodist Episcopal Church* (New York, NY: Garland Publishing, 1987), i.

women still bear the punishment God put on Eve after the mistake she made in the Garden of Eden. Elizabeth A. Macom, a womanist theologian, refers to:

Eve's disobedience, the sin brought into the world by her irresponsible actions, the compounding of that sin through the temptation of Adam, God's subsequent punishment of both parties, the blame she alone must face because of her primary role in that sin, and implications of that sin for her daughters.²³

For Womanist Theology, all debate of the positionality of women referred to the story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. A critic of Womanist Theology says that "Adam plucked that fruit and then encouraged Eve to do the same."²⁴ Actually, by saying this, Womanist Theology wants to portray woman as not at fault when she ate the fruit from the forbidden tree. This idea is a different doctrine of sin and perception of women than what would pervade Western civilization.²⁵ Nevertheless, as Old Testament specialist Phyllis Trible says, the old analysis of this story remains:

God, who is male, created man before woman, which makes man superior to woman; woman is created for instrumental goals (To be man's helper), which makes man's goals, needs, and desires prior in importance; woman is taken out of man's rib, which makes her very existence derivative; woman receives her name from man, and so is answerable to him; woman tempted man to disobey, and so is responsible for the presence of sin in the world; woman's punishment (the pain of childbirth) is more severe than man's punishment, which indicates that her sin is greater; because woman has proven herself simple-minded, gullible, and untrustworthy (if not purposefully evil), thereby allowing both sex and death to enter the world, God has given man the right to rule over her.²⁶

Reverend Beverly Ray, a womanist theologian and preacher, also struggled and discussed her fight to be a licensed and ordained minister in her church in Roury, North Carolina.

²³ Elizabeth A. Macom, "Eve and the Rhetoric of Re-Vision: A Feminist Archetypal Analysis of the Archetype of Eve as Re-Visioned in Songs of Three Female Popular Musicians" (Master's thesis, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1986), 51.

²⁴ Grant, *Perspectives on Womanist Theology*, 216.

²⁵ John A. Phillips, *Eve: The History of an Idea* (San Francisco, CA: Harper and Row, 1984), 57.

²⁶ Phyllis Trible, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1978), 73.

Her pastor and many members of the congregation believed that men held the sole right to pastoral leadership. However, their sexist beliefs did not deter her belief in a God of equality. She attributed her ordination to secret prayer by the pastor. As an argument for her ordination, she suggested that many well-meaning persons misunderstood Apostle Paul's writing in 1 Timothy 2:11–12 and 1 Corinthians 14:34–35. One should not use these verses as a basis for oppressing women. These arguments created a major influence on the position of women in ministry. Later she commented that there are many women who do the work of God and that they have more involvement in ministry than many male ministers. Reverend Beverly Ray states:

Recounted in vivid detail her pastor's replacement of her as Bible study teacher with a male minister who was much less prepared academically and who did not even profess to have the gift of teaching as she did. Ray began the class with six or seven people in attendance. By the end of the month, more than one hundred people were coming. In spite of this and other instances of overt sexism, Ray said she believes women's first priority should be their homes. Male ministers, she noted, have wives to take care of their home.²⁷

Ray's last point identifies what should be the duties of men toward their homes. The fact that she emphasizes that male ministers have wives to take care of their homes, places women beneath men. Later, she continues, saying "When Nioshi was young, I would sit in the back of the church to give her room to move around without disturbing the service. What would I have looked like in the pulpit with my child running wild? I could not sacrifice my child for ministry."²⁸

At this stage, Ray's remarks are important as those made by mothers of African American history. One of the most important tasks in describing and analyzing Black women's history regarding ministry is centering the experience of these women.

²⁷ Grant, *Perspectives on Womanist Theology*, 219.

²⁸ Grant, *Perspectives on Womanist Theology*, 219.

Womanist Theology failed to produce a clear analysis about the role of women in ministry based on the history of Black women. The history of African Americans makes it clear that a woman has no role in ministry.

To solve this problem, Womanist Theology found it necessary to swing the center of the problem and justify and judge knowledge by its own norms without the need of contrast or even implementing that structure as one's own. This means that history should be generalized. History is wide and concerns the elements that create the impression of several patterns moving in different directions or multiple rhythms in the context of design. Clearly, symmetry fails to derive from uniformity as it does in European-American quilts.²⁹ This symmetry comes from diversity.

This symmetry in diversity has implications for the economic, political, social, and religious histories of Black women. Just as quilt makers use contrast to structure or organize the strips of cloth that compose a quilt, the lives of Black women can incorporate—with relative ease at times—the most diverse experiences and resources.

Conclusion

The role of women in ministry brought many problems. Various theological disciplines studied this issue. These disciplines brought great ideas concerning the role of women in ministry. There is no physical information about the role of women in ministry in the Bible, but the Bible contains a strong philosophy that seems to not accommodate women in ministry. The Bible does depict some few women who have involvement in ministry.

²⁹ Elsa Barkley Brown, "African-American Women's Quilting: A Framework for Conceptualizing and Teaching African-American Women's History," *Signs* 14 (1986): 921.

For womanist theologians, ministry is not limited by gender. For them the acceptance of Jesus through baptism is the door to ministry. Therefore, every baptized Christian is a minister who oversees the spreading of the word of God. This idea seems to be very weak when looking at the concept of ministry in the Bible, especially from the Old Testament priestly lineage of the Levites. However, if taking only the New Testament as the basis of a ministry model, the above idea can somehow make sense.

Womanist Theology looks at the essence of authority that empowers laypersons and ministers in doing ministry. They start by pointing out that most of the time laypersons ask themselves to identify which authority that permits them to speak out in the church on issues that concerns the entire church. They look to the Gospel of Mark to answer this question. Mark addressed this issue to Jesus approximately two thousand years ago. The chief priests, the scribes, and the elders asked Jesus, “By what authority are you doing these things” (Mk. 11:28). Ministers and laypersons who speak out in the church on issues that concern the entire church continue to repeatedly ask the same question. By what authority do you as non-ordained persons who hold no ecclesial office as such claim to minister in the name of the church to preach, to teach, to prophesy, and to evangelize? Jesus answered the priests, scribes, and elders with a personal query. As a result of their lack of awareness and fear, they failed to answer.

These views that Womanist Theology portrays are of interest to this project because they provide a new concept of how one should view ministry. For a long time, I took the model of the order of Melchizedek as a model for ministry. However, Womanist Theology reports that ministry can start at baptism, which is totally wrong, but the kind of ministry that starts at baptism requires a deeper look.

CHAPTER FIVE

INTERDISCIPLINARY FOUNDATIONS

Introduction

The role of women in ministry was an issue throughout the history of the church and throughout the Bible and it is still an issue withing the church in our days. Debates and research are being made to find out what should be the exact role of a women in ministry. According to history women occasionally achieved sympathetic roles in serving the church and found delight and a sense of success from being wives and mothers. The church and other disciplines continue to discuss what should be the role of women in ministry. A discipline called appreciative inquiry through its branch named appreciative leadership provides some insight into what the role of women in ministry in the twenty-first century should be.

Appreciative leadership is unique among leadership theories—both past and present. This uniqueness includes its strength-based practice of searching for the positive in people and organizations, and the role this plays in organizational innovation and transformation. According to Tracy Orr and Marti Cleveland-Innes, Appreciative Leadership is grounded in the field of Appreciative Inquiry (AI) defined by Cooperrider

and Whitney as the co-evolutionary search for the best in people, their organizations, and the world around them. It involves systematic discovery of what gives a system.¹

To bring in positivity and enthusiasm, leaders need to practice appreciative leadership that creates an atmosphere of change by focusing on strengths and not weaknesses. Appreciative leadership leverages strengths to drive change instead of overcoming weaknesses, promotes collaboration to build relationship, and endorses inclusivity to involve all stakeholders. Appreciative leadership makes the environment generative and produces a setting full of possibilities that increases productivity and cooperation while improving intrinsic drive to work on ideas and resilience with time. Appreciative leadership shows how to fully engage a team through positive inquiry and open dialogue so that everyone feels included and valued, inspired and motivated, and ready to work together to win.

In brief, appreciative leadership encourages shifting a system from a dynamic of reaction to a dynamic of appreciation, from fixing gaps to elevating potential, and from healing to building capacity. Undoubtedly it results in new, innovative, and bold ways of working through positive transformation. Positivity builds resilience, removes fatigue, builds resources, and eliminates negative resentment. Hence leaders can use appreciative leadership as a tool to elevate positive emotion in a stress-prone life and business. This chapter discusses appreciative leadership, the role of an appreciative leader, the five core strategies of appreciative leadership, leadership styles in contrast to appreciative leadership, how appreciative leadership helps women, as well as the relationship between appreciative leadership and employee well-being in everyday working life.

¹ Tracy Orr and Marti Cleveland-Innes, "Appreciative Leadership: Supporting Education Innovation," *International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning* 16, no. 4 (October 2015): 235-236, ProQuest.

What Is Appreciative Leadership?

Appreciative leadership is defined as the relational capacity to mobilize creative potential and turn it into positive power and to set in motion ripples of confidence, energy, enthusiasm, and performance to make a positive difference in the world.

Integrated in this definition are four formative ideas about appreciative leadership:

1. Appreciative leadership practices are relational. All work, indeed, all life, occurs in relationship. None of the qualities attributed to good leaders stand alone. By oneself, one cannot be inspiring, visionary, humble, or flexible. These qualities are the achievements of a coactive process in which others' affirmation is essential. Leadership resides in the confluence. Relational capacity means we accept relationships as always present, as surrounding us and infusing us with their presence, as the context for all that we do and are. The appreciative leadership task, then, is to become relationally aware, to tune into patterns of relationship to see, hear, sense, and affirm what is already happening in order to join in and perform with it.

2. Appreciative leadership practices are positive and life affirming. The processes and practices of appreciative leadership grow from a positive worldview—a set of beliefs and a way of seeing people and situations that is uniquely and by choice positive and life affirming. It is a worldview that seeks to hold each and every person in positive regard. The appreciative leadership task is to understand that everyone has unique gifts and creative potential that come forth when invited through affirmation, inquiry, and dialogue.

3. Appreciative leadership turns potential into positive power (results). At the heart of appreciative leadership are processes and practices for sensing potential and working with others to turn it into positive power; that is, into life-affirming results. With the support of appreciative leadership, people can outgrow the limits of their realities and move into a larger, more appreciative world. The appreciative leader enlarges everyone's knowledge and vision of the world, not by having solid answers but with expansive questions. It is precisely through inquiry that appreciative leaders realize and unleash not their own but other peoples' genius. With appreciative leadership, powerful, sustainable results come from unleashing peoples' creative energy and enthusiasm.

4. Appreciative leadership sets ripples of change in motion. Our words, deeds, and relationships influence those whom we touch and, subsequently, those with whom they relate. Indeed, it might be said that we are all like pebbles cast into life's pond. Our influence ripples outward, affecting people, organizations, and communities well beyond our immediate reach. Appreciative leadership processes set things in motion. By activating vibrant conversations and collaborative relationships, they unleash people's creative potential, encouraging those people to do the same for others. In short, appreciative leadership sends waves of positive change rippling from one relationship to another – and to the world at large.²

The charge that appreciative leadership is genderless and lacking in cultural qualities means it is not based on a particular gender and particular culture; it involves every person who wants to lead or who is already a leader. Persons question the positive differences that appreciative leadership brings most of the time questioned because they

² Diana Whitney and Amanda Trosten-Bloom, "Appreciative Leadership: Responding Relationally to the Questions of Our Time," *AI Practitioner* 18 (2016): 62-63.

are so positive, and it is not easy to believe them. However, they truly make a great impact on people's lives.

The Role of Appreciative Leader

An appreciative leader is the one who accelerates change and fosters the best in others. As mentioned in the introduction, an appreciative leader is a strength-based leader. Leaders are expected to be role models of appreciative inquiry in their kinship with others and take part along with other faculty and associates in the research procedure. In other words, the leader is of less value than the questions she or he asks, the discussion these questions spur, and the ongoing search for seeing the optimistic potential in both the faculty and the organization. According to Tracy Orr and Marti Cleveland-Innes:

Leadership concepts such as the Great Man Theory, Trait Theory, Behaviour Theory, and Transformational Theory rely on the characteristics and behaviours of the leader and elevate the leader in a way that would be counter-productive in an Appreciative Inquiry environment. Contingency Theory matches the characteristics of the leader with situational variables and therefore also misses the mark. What is necessary, and lacking in these other perspective on leadership, is the view of a positive core waiting to be discovered in all organizations. Transactional theories of leadership and Leader Membership Exchange (LMX) theories focus on the relationship of leader and member. Both theories originate in behavioural theory although LMX theory has moved beyond this theory to focus on different aspects of leader-follower dyads.³

Appreciative inquiry goes to the far side of this behavioral thinking and discussion of leader/follower kinetics to a wide view of structural member involvement as a co-creator of present and future possibilities. Appreciative leaders work toward a praise-stratified structure such that all faculty take part in responding to the primary optimistic questions at hand and are empowered to initiate and appoint what is necessary to move

³ Orr and Cleveland-Innes, "Appreciative Leadership," 237-238.

the system forward. Appreciative leaders trust the people with whom they work enough to step back and allow their personnel—co-constructors of the organizational future vision—to get to work. This is a very different leadership role, and although models of distributed and shared leadership may come closer in reflecting a flatter and increasingly shared leadership structure, the key to appreciative leadership is the leader's place within an appreciative process. This characteristic sets this leadership theory apart from many others.

An appreciative leader encourages positive inquiry and an imagery that leads to new, even multiple, future realities. This plays out as a communal forum that involves all its participants. Appreciative leaders are, according to Whitney, Trosten-Bloom, and Rader:

1. Willing to engage with other members of their organization or community to create a better way of doing business or living.
2. Willing to learn and change.
3. True believers in the power of the positive.
4. Leaders that care about people, often describing the work of their organization or business in terms of helping people learn, grow, and develop.⁴

These four characteristics of appreciative leaders go hand in hand with the five basic processes of appreciative inquiry, which are:

1. Choose the positive as the focus of inquiry.
2. Inquire into stories of the life-giving forces.

⁴ Diana Kaplin Whitney, Amanda Trosten-Bloom, and Kae Rader, *Appreciative Leadership: Focus on What Works to Drive Winning Performance and Build a Thriving Organization* (New York, NY: McGraw Hill Education, 2010), 177, https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/5470/aa5b504f46c9c2f62c58b77454a5f63f1c34.pdf?_ga=2.147568119.1179914856.1591747411-867065367.1591747411.

3. Locate themes that appear in the stories and select topics for further inquiry.
4. Create shared images for a preferred future.
5. Find innovative ways to create that future.⁵

The Five Core Strategies of Appreciative Leadership

Appreciative leadership and positive power have five areas of relational practice called the Five Strategies of Appreciative Leadership. In fact, each of the five strategies meets a different need people have for high performance, that is to know they belong, to feel valued for what they have to contribute, to know where the organization or community is headed, to know that excellence is expected and can be depended on, and to know they are contributing to the greater good. Inquiry allows people to know you value them and their contributions. When you ask people to share their thoughts and feelings, their stories of success, or their ideas for the future and you sincerely listen to what they have to say, you are telling them, “I value you and your thinking.”

Illumination helps people understand how they can best contribute. Through the practices of illumination, you can help people learn about their strengths and the strengths of others. You can give them confidence and encouragement to express themselves, take risks, and support others in working from their strengths. Inclusion gives people a sense of belonging. When you practice inclusion, you open the door for collaboration and co-creation. This, in turn, creates an environment in which people feel they are a part of something. When they feel a part of something, they care for it.

⁵ Mark Lau Branson, *Memories, Hopes, and Conversations: Appreciative Inquiry and Congregational Change* (Durham, NC: Alban Institute, 2004), 140.

Inspiration provides people with a sense of direction. By forging a vision and path forward, you give people hope and unleash energy. These are the foundations for transformation, innovation, and sustainable high performance. Integrity lets people know they are expected to give their best for the greater good and they can trust others to do the same. When you lead with integrity, people know they can depend on you to connect them to the whole. Your example sets a standard for others to follow.⁶

Appreciative leadership is a philosophy, a way of behaving, and a set of strategies that give rise to practices applicable across industries, sectors, and arenas of collaborative action. Appreciative leaders are affirmative by choice, and they use positive approaches to create sustainable values. They also more often see the potential in human beings and occasions when other leaders do not. When appreciative leaders see such potential, they take action, talk with others about it, and engage with others. In a study of schools, Bushe found that the best predictor of success in an appreciative inquiry project was the quality of school leadership.⁷

Leadership Style in Contrast with Appreciative Leadership

Several leadership styles embody appreciative leadership. When talking about leadership style and appreciative leadership in contrast with appreciative inquiry, it is difficult to come up with a definition that can define all those terms in one word. The word that seems to be key in defining the above expression is *leader*. Ted W. Engstrom

⁶ Corporation for Positive Change, “Five Strategies for Appreciative Inquiry,” Corporation for Positive Change, <https://positivechange.org/five-strategies-of-appreciative-leadership/>.

⁷ Anna Åslund, Ingela Bäckström, and Daniel Richardsson, “Managing by Appreciative Leadership to Create Efficient Organizations and Healthy Co-Workers” (paper, ICQSS 2011, 14th OMOD International Conference on Quality and Service Sciences, San Sebastian, August 2011), 172-173, <https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:443676/FULLTEXT01.pdf>.

says: What is leadership? No one seems to be really sure. We are able to define what *managers* do, but the closest we seem to be able to come to a broadly acceptable definition of leadership is, that which leaders do. Then when we try to define *leader*, about all the agreement we could get is that leaders lead.⁸

Some Leadership Styles

Leadership styles deal with how a person functions within the context of his or her organization. Describing the types of organizations or situations that either result from or are appropriate for a particular style of leadership simplifies the discussion surrounding different kinds of leadership styles. The present concern is with those who are in a position of leadership already, rather than those who wonder about their potential skills. These leadership styles include bureaucratic, permissive, laissez-faire, participative, and autocratic.

1. Bureaucratic style is marked by a continual reference to organization rules and regulation.
2. Permissive style focuses on the desire to keep everyone in the group satisfied.
3. Laissez-faire style has no leadership at all and allows everything to run its own course.
4. Participative style is used by those who believe the way to motivate others is to involve them in the decision-making process.

⁸ Ted W. Engstrom and Edward R. Dayton, *The Art of Management for Christian Leaders* (Waco, TX: Texas Word Books, 1976), 29.

5. Autocratic style is marked by reliance on authority and usually assumes that people will not do anything unless told to.⁹

Appreciative leadership focuses on what works to drive winning. Through research on appreciative leadership and positive power, it must contribute to or know where the organization or community heads.¹⁰

In summary, one cannot single out appreciative leadership as a leadership style because it focuses on the organizational structure of leadership. It involves systematic discovery of what gives a system life when it is most effective and capable in economic, ecological, and human terms.

How Does Appreciative Leadership Help Women?

Women in the twenty-first century, especially women of color, still face some sort of separatism regarding leadership. In his doctoral dissertation on educational leadership, Kimberley Henderson Stiemke writes, “Women of color continue to be underrepresented in academia as doctoral students and faculty, especially in positions of educational leadership. As a result, women of color remain on the fringes of educational leadership to the detriment of schooling in our society.”¹¹

In this inclusionary age of looking to educational research to support change and effect public policy, a program of study in an institution of higher education that specifically examines issues of social justice and diversity may be of value. Doctoral

⁹ Engstrom and Dayton, *The Art of Management for Christian Leaders*, 30.

¹⁰ Whitney, Trosten-Bloom, and Rader, *Appreciative Leadership*, 24.

¹¹ Kimberley Henderson Stiemke, “Women of Color in Educational Leadership Programs: An Emic Phenomenological Perspective,” (EdD diss., University of California San Diego, 2012), xvi.

completion among women of color is a critical step in obtaining educational leadership positions, which could constitute a substantive change that will positively affect the future of education for generations to come.

Within the United States institutions of higher education, women of color experienced historical legacies of exclusion and marginalization, often being left to their own devices to scaffold their way to degree completion with limited cognitive maps. This is especially true among first-generation college students. A lack of support for this group within higher education translates into low doctoral completion rates and lack of diversity among college faculty leadership. Unless transformation occurs in the policy and structure of university doctoral programs, women of color will continue to be on the margins of educational leadership to the continual detriment of schooling in our society.¹²

To solve this problem, one must refer to the understanding of the ways in which the principles of transformational leadership, critical pedagogy, and critical race theory interface and intersect in how transformational educational leadership can be re-conceptualized as applied to critical leadership. Application of this type of leadership practice might support the inclusion of more women of color in educational leadership positions. The only tool that can help accomplish all these aspects is appreciative leadership. As previously stated, appreciative leadership is a method that focuses on what works to drive winning, and the research performed through appreciative leadership contributes to knowing where the organization or community heads. This means that the transformation needed for women of color in education will be well-preserved and looked after if appreciative leadership is used to assess the needed transformation.

¹² Stiemke, "Women of Color in Educational Leadership Programs," 2-3.

To be more inclusive in a demographically changing society, leaders in higher education may need to develop greater self-awareness—an awareness of their own personal biases and prejudices as it pertains to race, gender, and ethnicity, and how they impact their decision-making. To help examine and understand the disenfranchisement of people of color may require educational leaders to use a critical race lens. Given the premise of applied critical leadership theory and appreciative leadership, those leaders, upon critical reflection and self-evaluation, will choose to change the status quo.

Along these lines, there are several ways leadership can provide more support for women of color. One is to increase their own awareness and understanding of different racial and/or ethnic groups and to apply critical leadership theory and appreciative leadership to become more adept at handling issues of diversity and racism in higher education. These suggestions can also apply to the role of women in ministry, where in the twenty-first century there is still a form of separatism since many still hold the view that women should not be in leadership positions. Therefore, it is important to assess the role of women in ministry in the twenty-first century in terms of appreciative leadership, and to use all the theories stated above to fashion a positive result.

Appreciative Leadership and Employee Well-Being in Everyday Working Life

Appreciative behavior is an important part of good leadership. Although the term *appreciative leadership* is more often used in popular management literature than in scientific publications, leadership scholars report appreciative behaviors in terms of praise and recognition, support, respect, constructive feedback, social reinforcement, or appreciation. One finds one of the earliest descriptions of appreciative leadership in the

dimension of (relationship-focused) “consideration,” as compared to the (task-focused) “initiating structure.”

In full-range leadership theory, the “individualized consideration” element of transformational leadership, and—albeit to a lower extent—the “contingent reward” element of transactional leadership refers to appreciative leadership. There are also aspects of appreciative leadership in the leader-member exchange theory, which focuses on elements such as trust and mutual obligation. Although there are differences between these approaches, they all describe positive relationship-based, socio-emotional leadership behaviors, and they contain acknowledgement of an employee’s individuality and a personalized interaction of leaders with the people they lead.

Appreciative leadership works through affective, motivational, and self-related processes by enhancing motivation, strengthening trust, and fostering a positive self-concept. Besides the well-established associations of good leadership with performance and job satisfaction, newer research examines the effects of leadership on employees’ health and well-being, with meta-analyses and reviews showing moderate effects. However, most of these studies are based on between-subject designs, and they focus on average levels of perceived leadership and their association with outcome variables in terms of the relative position of individuals within a sample. Only rarely do empirical investigations focus on intra-individual changes in the perception of leadership behaviors and their association with intra-individual changes in affective experiences and well-being. Arguably, however, such dynamics in everyday working life are important, and the relative position of individuals is likely to develop based on daily experiences.

Complementing traditional approaches, the present study, therefore, examines appreciative leadership by applying a diary study and a within-persons design. There is a wide range of behaviors that signal appreciative leadership. They include praise in terms of considering employee needs, showing interest in someone's opinion, assigning interesting new tasks, or honoring achievements with an award or in a recognition ceremony. Praise consisting of comments or gestures that acknowledge a person's accomplishments and contributions is the easiest and most flexible form of recognition, yet many managers under-utilize them. Whereas organizations often have programs and policies with regard to awards and recognition ceremonies, more informal but not institutionalized and often smaller opportunities for appreciation, such as spontaneous praise, often get overlooked. Whereas research does well in describing the different possibilities of showing appreciation as well as their general effects, there is little research about both the frequency of those different behaviors in daily working life and the short-term effects of appreciative behavior on a daily basis.¹³

In leadership literature, an appreciative leadership style includes different leader behaviors. These incorporate providing personal rewards, praise and recognition of one's achievements and qualities, supporting and showing respect, as well as other forms of positive *relations-oriented* leader behaviors. Further, and with specific relevance to the present study, Stocker and colleagues recently analyzed in a diary study the nature of appreciative behavior as qualitatively described by employees. They found that praise and compliments were the most frequent types of appreciative behavior. Further, the study characterized supervisors as an important source for appreciation. Therefore, the

¹³ Désirée Stocker et al., "Appreciative Leadership and Employee Well-Being in Everyday Working Life," *German Journal of Research in Human Resource Management* 28, nos. 1-2 (2014): 74-75.

current study perceives appreciative leadership as leader behavior containing praise and acknowledgment of subordinates' achievements, qualities, and appreciation of their efforts.

According to the matching principle, stressors and moderators are considered as matching when moderators are specific to the stressors being investigated. Thus, one expects appreciative leadership to be a matching moderator of the relationship between illegitimate tasks and turnover intention. First, appreciative leadership may mitigate the threat of decreasing employees' self-esteem caused by being assigned illegitimate tasks because recognition of one's achievements and qualities enhances one's self-esteem.

These positive experiences might compensate for the lack of appreciation and respect evoked by being assigned illegitimate tasks, leading to less turnover intentions. Secondly, appreciative supervisors help to create meaningfulness in the job context. Thus, employees may still perceive certain tasks as unnecessary and/or unreasonable, but they might put them in a different perspective and ascribe a different social meaning to these tasks within their work as a whole, if they experience appreciation from their supervisor. For example, instead of feeling threatened in their self-esteem, they might understand they must fulfill these tasks as long as organizational requirements and circumstances avoid change. They also might learn how the task fits into the bigger picture and perceive it as an important component of the overall process. Therefore, appreciative leadership behavior can attenuate the negative relationship between illegitimate tasks and turnover intentions by putting illegitimate tasks in a meaningful job context.

Hackman and Oldham also recognized meaningfulness as a core characteristic of work situations that drives employees' attitudes and behaviors. Empirical evidence supports the enhancement of self-esteem due to appreciative leadership. De Cremer and colleagues showed a positive impact of "rewarding leadership" on employees' self-esteem; that is, feelings of being a competent and capable employee. Furthermore, several studies indicate that transformational leadership, which includes appreciating behaviors, is related to the experience of meaningful work and found that subordinates of transformational supervisors viewed their work as more important and self-congruent. Employees who believe that their work as highly meaningful less frequently expressed intentions to quit and had less actual turnover than other employees. These mechanisms of enhancing self-esteem and creating meaningfulness in the job context suggest that illegitimate tasks are less likely to trigger turnover intentions among employees who perceive supervisory practices as highly appreciative. This project hypothesizes that appreciative leadership moderates the relationship between illegitimate tasks and turnover intentions. That is, illegitimate tasks will be less strongly associated with turnover intentions under conditions of high (compared with low) appreciation by the supervisor.¹⁴

In the twenty-first century persons overlook women who are in ministry and women in ministry do not get much praise for the hard work they do because they are women. One of the ideas that can uplift the role of women in ministry in the twenty-first century is the recognition of the socio-emotional and the focus on the intra-individuality

¹⁴ Ella Apostel, Christine J. Syrek, and Conny H. Antoni, "Turnover Intention as a Response to Illegitimate Tasks: The Moderating Role of Appreciative Leadership," *International Journal of Stress Management* 25, no. 3 (2010): 237-238.

that women do in their daily ministries. These will bring a new point of view to the issue of women in ministry, and these ideas are from appreciative leadership.

Conclusion

The role of women in ministry was an issue throughout the history of the church and throughout the Bible. According to history, women occasionally achieved sympathetic roles in serving the church and found delight and a sense of success from being wives and mothers. The church and other disciplines continue to discuss and struggles to find out, what should be the role of women in ministry. A discipline called appreciative inquiry through its branch named appreciative leadership provides some insight about what the role of women in ministry in the twenty-first century should be.

Appreciative leadership is unique among leadership theories both past and present. This uniqueness includes its strength-based practice of searching for the positive in people and organizations and the role this plays in organizational innovation and transformation. Appreciative leadership is defined as the relational capacity to mobilize creative potential and turn it into positive power and to set in motion ripples of confidence, energy, enthusiasm, and performance to make a positive difference in the world.

The charges that appreciative leadership are genderless and lacking in cultural qualities, mean it is not based on a particular gender and particular culture, but it involves every person who wants to lead or who is already a leader. The positive differences that appreciative leadership brings are most of the time questioned because they are so

positive, and it is not easy to believe them. However, they really do greatly impact people's lives.

Appreciative leadership is a philosophy, a way of behaving, and a set of strategies that give rise to practices applicable across industries, sectors, and arenas of collaborative action. Appreciative leaders are affirmative by choice, and they use positive approaches to create sustainable values. They also more often see the potential in human beings and occasions when other leaders do not. When appreciative leaders see such a potential they take action, talk with others about it, and engage with others. In a study of schools, Bushe found that the best predictor of success in an appreciative inquiry project was the quality of school leadership. In summary, one cannot single out appreciative leadership as a leadership style because it focuses on the organizational structure of leadership. It involves systematic discovery of what gives a system life when it is most effective and capable in economic, ecological, and human terms.

The suggestions given in this chapter about how appreciative leadership helps women also apply to the role of women in ministry. In the twenty-first century, there is still some form of separatism since many still hold the view that women should not be in leadership positions. Therefore, it is important to assess the role of women in ministry in the twenty-first century in terms of appreciative leadership, and to use all the theories stated above to fashion a positive result.

In the twenty-first century persons overlook women in ministry and women in ministry do not get much praise for the hard work they do; they are even not recognized for their achievements in ministry because of they are women. One of the ideas that can uplift the role of women in ministry in the twenty-first century is the recognition of the

socio-emotional and the focus on the intra-individuality that women are doing in their daily ministry. These will bring a new point of view to the issue of women in ministry, and these ideas are from appreciative leadership. Jackson W. Carroll says:

What kind of expertise is needed by pastors if they are to function with authority? The way we have organized our seminary curriculum indicates that we believe that clergy expertise involves a working knowledge of the Bible, theology, the history of the Church, ethics, and various theories and techniques of leadership and group life appropriate to the different roles of ordained ministry and the church.¹⁵

Women, through appreciative leadership, can perform the expertise discussed here.

Appreciative leadership recognizes the socio-emotional and the focus on the intra-individuality that women are doing in their daily ministry. This will bring a new point of view to the issue of women in ministry.

¹⁵ Jackson W. Carroll, *As One with Authority: Reflective Leadership in Ministry* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991), 120.

CHAPTER SIX

PROJECT ANALYSIS

My doctoral project comes from a long family experience that has become a center of interest in my ministry. I believe that God gave me the mission to study more about the role of women in ministry to establish a clear view about it, in order to help my local conference (the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the North Regional Conference of Madagascar) and my entire church. This is not an easy task because I first had to study the role of women in ministry in the American context, understand it, and then make a comparison between the American context and the context of my local conference. The problem is this: The Seventh-day Adventist Church in the North Regional Conference of Madagascar does not accept women in ministry, and the Kettering Seventh-day Adventist Church welcomes women in ministry, though both congregations are Seventh-day Adventist. The problem in my US context is that many members lack awareness of the theological and biblical foundations that support women in ministry, and the problem in my local conference is that the female members do not currently possess enough faith to believe that they can and are eligible to serve in leadership capacities in the local church.

The Book of Romans 16:1–7 enlightens my doctoral project about the role of women in ministry. There are several women who are involved in church leadership in Romans 16:1–7. All of them were prominent during the first church era and one of them, Junia, seems to be an apostle. Studying them has helped me have a better view about

what the role of women in ministry should be and will help develop my own view about the role of women in ministry. My local church, the whole Seventh-day Adventist Church, and the entire Christian world can benefit from my study.

Womanist Theology has provided some important input to my project. Womanist Theology is a recent development that focuses on the religious experiences of African Americans. In Womanist Theology, one acknowledges and confirms ministry through the call that one receives through baptism in Christ Jesus. God's authority that anoints everyone who accepts Jesus through baptism enables them to teach, preach, prophesy, and minister in many diverse aspects to one another and to the church. The source of this affirmation is not new but resides in the earliest history of Christianity. It evolved from a small Jewish sect of the marginalized to a religion that spread throughout the known world, in keeping with Jesus' command to those who followed him to "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (Mt. 28:19). For as he proclaimed, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me" (Mt. 28:18).

Methodology

Planning

Following the advice and guidance from my school mentors, it has become obvious that I should present my ministry research project as a biblically centered workshop for the church members of the church I am attending now (The Malagasy Seventh-day Adventist Church of Berrien Springs, Michigan). This does not exclude

participants from the community surrounding the church and some other people who are interested with the role of women in ministry, such as people from the neighborhood, extended family members of church members, visitors, etc. This project is designed for adult men and women ages eighteen years and older. My hypothesis is that providing a workshop that brings awareness through a biblical and theological foundation for empowering women in leadership and avenues for them to articulate their beliefs, will equip them with information, strengthen them in their faith, and empower them to articulate that faith to themselves and others. My hypothesis will be measured using qualitative analysis inclusive of pre- and post-surveys, questionnaires, storytelling, and observations.

This endeavor was anticipated with a project timeline crafted to contribute to the development, planning, and implementation of my ministry research project. A year and a half before the application of the project, four professional associates and two contextual associates were solicited to support my project. Letters were written and emailed to each prospective professional associate and contextual associate. The letter defined the drive of my ministry research project, target audience, hypothesis, projected research project implementation date, and location. The emails contained the attached letter and a copy of my candidacy review packet. All acknowledged the invitation to assist with my research project.

In September 2021, an invitational letter to serve as a workshop speaker was written and emailed to Pastor Andriamparany Rabelohataona to speak about the ministry of Priscila and Aquila in Romans 16: 3, Pastor Bina Herivonjy to speak about what the role of women in ministry should be in relation to Romans 16:1–7, Pastor Rasoanaivo

Lahintsoa to present a Sabbath school based on the topic of the role of women in ministry, and Elder Azariah Fanivana to speak about Phoebe's ministry in Romans 16:1–2 and to explain it in relation to the role of women in ministry. All four acknowledged the invitations to speak at the workshop and were informed that following their presentations they would each have a twenty-minute timeframe to answer questions.

A one-and-a-half-hour Zoom meeting was held with the professional and contextual associates to offer a summary of the research project, the timeline, discussion of how they would offer their expertise and respond to questions. Respective reunion took place via Zoom, from November 2020 through June 2021, around one and a half hours with the professional associates. During this timeframe, I worked with the human ministry of the Malagasy Church of Berrien Springs, Michigan, to discuss breakfast and lunch menus and prices, draft a workshop flyer, and develop and collect research instruments to be used.

Development

The biblically based workshop expanded over eight weeks on four Sabbaths. The workshop was scheduled to be held in person at the Malagasy Seventh-day Adventist Church of Berrien Springs. However, because of Covid-19, the last session took place at Michiana Christian Park, where a large room was used to accommodate the larger number of participants on the last Sabbath of the workshop.

In October 2021, I consulted Michiana Christian Park manager and discussed having the workshop at the chapel and dining room. She was positive about it, but she did give some recommendations concerning to use of the park during the pandemic.

Data Gathering Methods

Several methods were used to gather data for the project. Google Forms were used to create pre- and post-survey forms, a questionnaire, and a registration form that included questions specific to participants. A fifteen-minute pre-screening interview was scheduled with each registered participant to review the informed consent form, the qualifications, and expectations of completing all scheduled sessions.

Implementation

Registration

The workshop flyer was put in several locations of the church where the workshop would take place and in nearby stores such as Walgreen's, Apple Valley Supermarket, Harding's, the Dollar Store, and Walmart. The women's ministry of my church also advertised the workshop on their communication logs. They put the flyer in their communication logs and wrote that every church member should bring at least one visitor to the workshop. They also posted the flyer with a Google Form registration link, on the ministry context's Facebook page and church's website. The workshop flyer was scheduled to be posted from October 1, 2021, to November 15, 2021, to give adequate opportunity for any adult female interested in attending.

Registrants

Six women from the women's ministry of the church registered prior to the workshop date. These women were active members of the women's ministry. Additionally, some church members and people from the community also registered. A few of the people from the community withdrew as time went by. They did not say why they withdrew, but I surmise that it was because of the consent form, which they did not want to sign. There were also a few church members who withdrew, saying the time of the workshop did not fit their schedule. They did say, however, that they were going to support the project with prayers, and they wished me good luck on the project. In total, the daily attendance of the workshop was no fewer than thirty persons per session, but the active attendees were around twenty persons. By active attendees, I mean participants who were present from the beginning to the end of the workshop and were registered attendants. There were some people who did not register but attended the project, and there were people who withdrew and other people who came during the workshop. On the day of the workshop, one of the participants dropped her participation at the beginning of the workshop. This was a dilemma, but I did my best to approach all the participants I could to encourage them to stay until the end of the workshop and participate with all the activities. I think it worked because in total I had thirteen persons do the pre-survey and nine persons do the post-survey, which I think was not that bad.

Workshop Schema

On October 1, 2021, I established the workshop schema that was finalized on October 5th. The workshop schema contained a pre-workshop on Friday, October 15,

from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.; workshop on four Saturdays—October 16, October 23rd, November 6th, and November 13th, from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.; and post-workshop interviews on Friday, October 15th, from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Pre-Screening

On October 14, 2021, the informed consent form was emailed to all the registrants. Between October 14th and October 15th, a fifteen-minute individual meeting was scheduled with each registered participant to thank the participants for registering, to make sure they met the criteria, and to read and review the informed consent form. This meeting was held in the small conference room of the church. The participants were presented the follow pre-screening questions:

Pre-Screening Questionnaire

1. Ask if registrant had a struggle understanding the role of women in ministry.
2. Ask the registrant if he/she is eighteen years and older.
3. Ask if registrant has any problems, he/she wants to pray for.
4. Distribute a bulletin of the program.
5. Inform registrant that he/she is free to ask any question about the topic to be discussed during the workshop.
6. Ask registrant if he/she has any questions or concerns.
7. Inform registrant that the informed consent form will be emailed to for electronic signature, date, and submission to the ministry project overseer.

8. Inform registrant that workshop materials and agenda will be provided next week after he/she electronically signs, dates, and returns the informed consent form.
9. Encourage registrant to contact me by the phone number provided or by email for any questions or concerns prior to the workshop date.

Workshop Recap

The registered participants received an informational e-mail consisting of the workshop schema, speaker bios, ground rules, and community resource list. Participants were encouraged to feel free to partake of the refreshments throughout the course of the workshop.

Workshop Material

A day prior to the start of the workshop, I gave cards to each workshop registrant. A journal, colorful scripture cards, colored index cards to write questions or comments for speakers, a pack of permanent markers, stickers, two colored ink pens, a standing cross with the word “Grace” written on it, and individual bags of cheese crackers, peanuts, fruit snacks, granola bars, and pretzels. The goal was to offer participants the needed tools for the workshop as well as a reminiscence gift. These were given during the pre-workshop session.

Pre-Workshop (6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.)

On Friday, October 15, 2021, all four speakers, met with me at the church to discuss how each topic to be presented on the workshop should be handled. We reviewed the workshop schema and answered any questions and concerns.

Pre-Workshop (6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.)

On Friday, October 15, 2021, I preached during the Sabbath opening vespers about the role of women in ministry. My aim in this sermon was to show the speakers how we should present the topic they were going to present to the participants. Twenty participants attended the vespers. During the pre-workshop, each registrant who signed an informed consent form was admitted. I welcomed all the participants, conducted an opening prayer, and introduced myself. I also read the rules and regulations of the workshop, and the ministry leader read over the ground rules and asked if there were any questions or any additional rules the participants would like to suggest. There were no additional rules suggested. The informed consent form was read again, and participants were asked if they had any questions or concerns. There were none. They were encouraged to ask questions or make comments during and after the speakers' presentations. They were informed of their options to ask questions or make comments and speak directly.

The participants were expected to complete the pre-survey questionnaire. Participants were requested to go to the URL link that opened a Google Form for each document. All three URL links were posted separately and were displayed on the church screen in front of the pulpit. At the end, all participants stated they were finished.

An overview of the schema for Saturday, October 16, 2021, was provided. The participants were informed that they could come as early as 7:45 a.m., allowing us to be on time. They were informed of the praise and worship music and that opening prayer would begin at 8:00 a.m. and end at 8:15 a.m. A Sabbath school lesson discussion focused on the role of women in ministry would be between 9:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. I shared some part of my spiritual autobiography school assignment as a parturition of the workshop. The participants were informed that a song entitled, “Women for Christ” would be sung throughout the workshop as a theme song. The person from the church in charge of songs and praise and I taught the song. Then the participants were given five minutes to write down what stood out for them and were invited to share if they felt comfortable. No one came forward. I thanked the participants for their presence, and I told them that they could still write down what stood out for then and give it to me the next day. We then transitioned to my sharing my spiritual journey and personal testimony.

Workshops Begin

Week One October 16, 2021

Participant started to come at 7:45 a.m. A light breakfast of eggs, muffins, donuts, coffee, milk, and juice was served in the lobby of the church. The praise team of the church sang from 8:00 a.m. to 8:20 a.m. I asked those who had not finished their pre-surveys to finish before the workshop started. The link with the pre-survey questions was displayed on the screen of the church. Those who were able to log on their phones completed it on their phones, those who did not have access to their phones were given a

tablet to complete the survey. This took about twenty minutes. Then words of welcome and thanks for coming were made by Mme Elsay Fanivana (the director of women's ministry), followed by an opening hymn and a prayer by Mme Elsa Fanivana. Pastor Rasoanaivo Lahinitsoa conducted a Sabbath school lesson based on the role of women in ministry. Sabbath school was finished by 10:15 a.m. and Pastor Rasoanaivo Lahinitsoa closed the Sabbath school with a prayer and a closing hymn.

A Thirty-Minute Break

After the break, the praise team started to sing songs of praise, followed by some Bible riddles (game) based on the role of women in ministry. There were questions such as, "Who can give an example of a woman leader in the Old Testament?" "Can someone give a verse that says that men and women are equal?" "Who can give me the chapter in the Book of Romans that mentions twenty-five women who were leaders in the church?"

The participants were excited and happy. I gave Bibles and books to those who answered the questions right. Three participants received a book entitled *Women's Ordination in the Catholic Church* by John O'Brien and one participant got a Bible. This took about fifty minutes, and then we started the divine service.

The opening hymn was sung followed by the doxology; the church pastor Andriamparany Rabelohataona did the call to worship and words of welcome; Elder Azariah Fanivana did the tithe offering; Pastor Bina Herivonjy did the pastoral prayer; and Mme Fanantenana did the children's story. Mme Hantamalala presented a special song, and then I presented the first sermon of the workshop, "The Role of Women in Ministry," on Roman 16:1–7, on Sabbath Morning for one and a half hours. I presented

this sermon in an interactive way in which the participants were free to ask pertinent questions if they wished. Five questions were asked. The first question was about the context of Roman 16:1–7 in relation to 1 Corinthians 14:34, where Apostle Paul forbade women to speak in church. This was a tough question to handle. I just responded that we should not generalize a specific case in a specific circumstance to make it a rule for the whole Bible. This was understood. The second question was, “If Paul had no problem having women in ministry, based on Romans 16:1–7, why he did not mention clearly that these women were in a full-time ministry?” I answered this question by pointing at Romans 16:7, where Junia is called an “apostle.” I presented my finding about this passage, that we see clearly that she was among the apostles. The three remaining questions were about why the church (Seventh-day Adventist Church) is so silent about the integration of women in ministry? This was also a tough question to answer, and I did not want to answer it on the first day of the workshop. So, I told them we would answer that question as the workshop continued. This was not an easy task. I had to be careful with my answers, especially as they touched on the doctrine and policy of the church.

After the sermon, we had a hymn and closing prayer, and a closing hymn concluded the divine service. We had a potluck for lunch. The women’s ministry of the church, with my help, arranged the potluck.

On the Sabbath afternoon, we started at 2:30 p.m. The workshop started with some songs from the praise team of the church. Then a hymn was sung together to begin the workshop. Mme Onjaniaina did the opening prayer, and the first presenter Pastor Andriamparany Rabelohataona, who is the church pastor, presented the kinds of

ministries the women in Romans 16:1–7 was involved. This took two hours. Lots of questions came from the participants.

Pastor Andriamparany Rabelohataona explained in his presentation that we cannot take the ministry of women found in Romans 16:1–7 to be a model of ministry that will allow women to be integrated into a full-time ministry. This was a conservative and biblical way of explaining Roman 16:1–7. There were lots of questions asked after the presentation, the main question being, “Why is the ministry performed by the women in Romans 16:1–7 not looked at as full-time ministry, and why can’t it be a model for integrating women in ministry?” Pastor Andriamparany Rabelohataona answered the question based on his presentation, and I told the participants that we would look at this in depth in the second session of the workshop. They could, however, write their comments and give them to the deacon who was collecting them. After Pastor Andriamparany Rabelohataona closed his presentation with a prayer, a hymn was sung to close Pastor Rabelohataona’s presentation. There was a thirty-minute break to let the participants get refreshed so the workshop could move on in a respectful and peaceful atmosphere.

After the break, the workshop resumed with a prayer and a hymn. I led a discussion from a historical point of view with participants about the kinds of ministries the women in the Book of Romans 16:7 was doing. This took another two, to two and a half hours. The participants liked it. I explained to them that the ministry of women seen in Roman’s 16:1–7 was the same as any ministry an ordained pastor would perform in today’s context. The discussion went well, and the participants agreed and did not have

comments. We closed the discussion with a prayer and hymn, and then we went for a ten-minute break.

After the break, the workshop resumed with a hymn and a prayer, followed by a closing sermon from Pastor Bina Herivonjy entitled “We Are All the Same in the God’s Sight.” He pointed out that there is no difference between the ministry of women and the ministry of men in God’s sight. What matters is the willingness and the commitment of the person who is doing the ministry. He used Galatian 3:28 as the base of his sermon. The first session of the workshop ended with a closing prayer and a closing hymn. I told the participants to come for the second session, which would take place on Sabbath October 23rd at the same place and same hour.

Workshops Continue - Week Two October 23, 2021

I gathered the basic ideas that came from the participants about the types of ministries that women in Romans sixteen were doing. I did an evaluation of the different points of views that came from the participants. In this session I presented to the congregation my findings about the ministry that the women in the Romans 16:1–7 were doing. From an exegetical point of view, the Biblical, historical, and theological aspects of Romans 16:1–7 would be presented in depth.

As with the first session, the participants started to arrive at 7:45 a.m. A light breakfast was served in the lobby of the church. The praise team of the church sang songs of praises from 8:00 a.m. to 8:20 a.m. After these, words of welcome and thanks for coming were made, followed by an opening hymn and prayer. Elder Azariah Fanivana conducted a Sabbath school lesson. This time the Sabbath school was an interactive

question and answer period covering the collected comments from the first session.

Sabbath school finished by 10:15 a.m. Elder Azariah Fanivana closed the Sabbath school with a prayer and a closing hymn.

A Thirty-Minute Break

After the break, the praise team sang songs of praises, and this time rather than a Bible riddle game, I told the participants to write down their struggle to understand what the role of women in ministry should be. The first two with the longest comments would be rewarded. The participants wrote their comments, the papers were collected, and I read them. There were two comments that seemed to be pertinent. One of the participants wrote of a struggle with the role of women in ministry because Jesus himself did not accept women in ministry. There were no women among the twelve disciples. The second comment was about Ellen G. White's statement that women should not be integrated in full-time ministry. I was planning to talk about these in sessions three and four. I gave these two participants a Bible as a reward. Then divine service started.

The opening hymn was followed by the doxology; Pastor Bina Herivonjy did the call to worship and words of welcome; Elder Azariah Fanivana did the tithe offering; Pastor Rasoanaivo Lahinitsoa did the pastoral prayer; and Mme Hantamalala did the children's story. The church choir sang a special song, and then I presented the second sermon of the workshop based on my findings about the ministry of the women in Romans 16:1–7. From an exegetical point of view, the biblical, historical, and theological aspect of the Romans 16:1–7 would be presented in depth. Unlike the first sermon, this sermon was not presented in an interactive way, where the participants were free to ask questions. The

basic information I portrayed in this sermon is that whether from the biblical, historical, or theological point, it is hard to find a common agreement that will satisfy all those interpretations. The only notion that can bring them together is to look at Jesus and take the example of how Jesus dealt with women in ministry. This sermon took an hour and forty-five minutes. A closing prayer followed by a closing hymn concluded the divine service. Then a potluck for lunch was organized. The women ministry of the church with my help arranged the potluck.

Like the first session, the Sabbath afternoon started at 2:30 p.m. The workshop started with some songs from the praise team of the church. Then a hymn was sung, and the workshop began. Mme Hantamalala did the opening prayer, and then I resumed the workshop by addressing some challenges between the historical and biblical interpretations of Roman 16:1–7. The biblical interpretation of this passage will always be based on the text, this passage does not show that women can take part in ministry. The historical interpretation will say the contrary to this. The problem with these two interpretations is that they are presenting an opposite philosophy about the text in order for them to agree that there must be a new philosophy that can combine them together. Although this cannot be realized now, it will probably be achieved in the future. I also made it clear that theology is progressive, and new truth will be discovered with time. So, we should not lose hope in our study of the role of the women in ministry. For the moment, I presented to them the interpretation of the role of women in ministry based on Womanist Theology, which describes baptism as the entrance to ministry. From this point of view, it is clear that every person who has been baptized is a minister, regardless of gender, race, or age. I concluded the presentation with a call to enter the ministry (to

accept Jesus as your personal savior and be baptized), and a teenage girl responded to the call.

After this, I asked the participants and the whole congregation to kneel down and pray to God. If they had been baptized, they should recommit their life to God's ministry. Those who had not been baptized I told to ask God for the opportunity to enter his ministry. Everyone prayed and there were cries and shouts to God, asking for recommitment to his ministry and for an opportunity to enter his ministry. When the prayer session ended, the church was quiet. I sensed that everyone had been spiritually uplifted. This section was closed with a prayer and a hymn. A thirty-minute break followed. This section took about two hours.

After the break, the workshop resumed with a prayer and a hymn. I asked if there was anyone who wanted to share something about what they had learned so far in the workshop. Six participants shared what they liked and what they learned from the two sessions so far. In summary they wanted to say that the biblical interpretation of the scripture was basically making the role of women in ministry difficult for them. They did not have a proper word to express their ideas, but what they wanted to say was understood. This took about two hours, followed then by a closing prayer and a closing hymn, which ended the second session.

Workshops Continue - Week Three November 6, 2021

This session was the most difficult session because I addressed the issue of Ellen G. White and the role of women in ministry. Ellen G. White was a prophetess and one of the pioneers of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. As I have already mentioned, Ellen G.

White believed that women should take part in full-time ministry. Her statement about the role of women in ministry are highly respected in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. If you go against her statements, you can be considered a heretic. Actually, on several occasion the church wanted to ordain Ellen G. White, but she refused because her view was that women should take part in full-time ministry. Her approach caused the Seventh-day Adventist Church to not be open to the ordination of women. Even now, the Seventh-day Adventist Church is divided on the issue of women's ordination and the role of women in ministry because of her teaching.

Like the first and second sessions, the participants started to arrive at 7:45 a.m. Following a light breakfast, the praise team sang songs of praises from 8:00 a.m. to 8:20 a.m. After these, words of welcome and thanks and an opening hymn and prayer were followed by a Sabbath school lesson. This time the Sabbath school was based on the history of women's ordination/women in ministry within the Seventh-day Adventist Church and the writings of Ellen G. White. Sabbath school was done by 10:15 a.m. Ps Bina closed the Sabbath school with a prayer and a closing hymn. I noticed that the participants were very attentive in this section.

A Thirty-Minute Break

After the break, the praise team sang songs of praise. A small movie on the life of Ellen G. White was played at the church. In that movie, there is a segment in which Ellen G. White is actually seen as a leader of the church. Pastors and church leaders came to her to seek advice on how the church should be handled. I chose this movie because I wanted to show the participants that although Ellen G. White rejected the involvement of

women in full-time ministry, her ministry was even more what I call full-time ministry, because during her lifetime she was the one who instructed pastors and church leaders that were in full-time ministry. This took about thirty minutes, after which the divine service started.

The opening hymn was followed by the doxology, the call to worship, words of welcome, the tithe offering, my pastoral prayer, and the children's story. The church choir sang a special song, then I presented the third sermon of the workshop, which was based on the history of women in ministry in the Seventh-day Adventist Church and the writings of Ellen G. White. I had to be very careful with this subject because it is very sensitive in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. In my sermon, I drew the attention of the participants to the movie we had just watched and asked them a question, "What makes more sense in life, being part of a system but rejecting the system, or not considering yourself outside the system but actually being a part of the system?" They did not quite understand my question, so I had to explain it in another way. I told them that Ellen G. White rejected the involvement of women in ministry, but God used her to perform a ministry that was greater than the ministry of male pastors of her time, because it was through her ministry that the Seventh-day Adventist Church was born. They now understood my point and started to look at me straight in the pulpit. I was scared and thought I had made a heretical statement. I continued my sermon and then concluded by saying that it is only God who can call to ministry not humans. God can use either men or women for his work. A prayer and a closing hymn followed the sermon, and then a potluck for lunch was organized by the women's ministry of the church with my help.

Like the first and second sessions, the Sabbath afternoon started at 2:30 p.m. The workshop started with some songs from the praise team of the church. Then a hymn was sung together, and the workshop began. I did the opening prayer and then Pastor Andriamparany Rabelohataona made a presentation about how we should apply the writing of Ellen G. White in our days. His main point was that what Ellen G. White thought about women's ordination/the role of women in ministry was of her time. She herself rejected ordination, but God used her and did a mighty work for God. Ordination comes from God and ministry is designed by God. This was a very interesting topic. This section took about two hours and was followed by a thirty-minute break.

After the break, the workshop resumed with a prayer and hymn, and I then opened the meeting for those who wanted to share something about the presentations or the sermon that had been presented that day. One participant said that the writings of Ellen G. White were made for the last days of the history of the world and not for her time. He, therefore, anticipated that what Ellen G. White wrote and believed about women's ordination/the role of women in ministry would be more for our time. This was a tough question. To answer this question, I assigned the participants to four groups of eight persons. I told them to discuss the importance of having women in ministry in our time. At the end of the discussion every group had a speaker to report what they found. This took about an hour and a half. The group discussions went well. Every group responded that we need women in ministry in our time more than in Ellen G. White's time because we believe more in men and women equality in our time than during Ellen G. White's time. This was good, so I concluded by saying that indeed Ellen G. White's writings are for us who are living during the last days. But her writing should be looked at within the

context of the time in which the message was published. There was a big debate about this, but everything went well at the end. We ended a little late. This section took three and half hours in total. The workshop ended with a prayer and a hymn. I then reminded the participants that our last session would take place the following Sabbath, Saturday, November 13, 2021.

Workshops Continue - Fourth Week November 13, 2021

Due to the spread of Covid-19, churches were closed so this session was held at Michiana Christian Park. This was the last session of the workshop. The floor was open to anyone who wanted to share their experiences about what they had learned during the workshop. Sabbath school started at 9:00 a.m. and the participants started to arrive at 8:00 a.m. There was no breakfast. The praise team of the church sang songs of praises from 9:00 a.m. to 9:20 a.m. After these, came words of welcome followed by an opening hymn and a prayer. The Sabbath school lesson was entitled “Women Victorious in Christ.” Sabbath school was closed at 10:15 a.m. with a prayer and a closing hymn followed the prayer.

A Thirty-Minute Break

After the break, the praise team started to sing songs of praise. A small movie of the life of Ellen G. White was played at the church, and then the divine service started. The opening hymn was followed by the doxology. I did the call to worship and words of welcome; Pastor Andriamparany Rabelohataona, the church pastor, did the tithe offering; Pastor Bina Herivonjy did the pastoral prayer; and Mme Onjaniaina did children story.

The church choir sung a special song, and then Elder Azariah Fanivana presented a sermon entitled “Women for Christ Ministry.” This sermon consisted of words of exhortation and encouragement to women to take part in ministry. A prayer and closing hymn followed the sermon, and then a potluck for lunch was organized. The women’s ministry of the church with my help arranged the potluck.

The Sabbath afternoon started at 2:30 p.m. The workshop started with some songs from the praise team of the church. Since this session was an open floor session, I asked everyone who wanted to participate in doing something such as a Bible game, share testimonies, sing a song, present a poem to come up and present what he or she wanted to present. All the participants came one by one and shared what they had learned and said words of thanks to the organizers of the workshop. This was a wonderful experience. It lasted about two hours and was followed by a thirty-minute break.

When the workshop resumed, I preached a small sermon about the importance of women in ministry in the sight of God. Then the church pastor and a representative from the participants came forward to thank me and wished me good luck in my studies. They prayed for me, and the pastor told me I had done a good job. Light refreshments were provided plus words of thanks for participating. I reminded the participants about completing the post-survey. I gave them the link of the post-survey and told them that I would also send the survey to them by mail.

Summary of Learning

Although there were twenty participants present, there were thirteen forms submitted for the pre-survey and nine forms for the post-survey. It appears that seven

participants chose not to complete the pre-survey and eleven chose not to complete the post-survey. They might also have forgotten to hit the submit button. I made sure all received the pre-survey before the start of the workshop and the post-survey at the end of the workshop.

The questions in both pre- and post-surveys were in short paragraph essay answer format. The pre-survey questions were just basic questions that sought to identify the knowledge of the participants in regard to the role of women in ministry.

Question One: “Do you agree with the following statement? “Women are not supposed to be integrated in ministry.” Give your answer in the line below.” Basically, all participants answered this question correctly. This means that one hundred percent of the participants responded correctly.

Question Two: “Do you agree with the following statement? “Women can be integrated in ministry but with a limited capacity.” Give your answer in the line below.” Nine participants answered correctly on this question, which means that sixty-nine percent of the participants responded correctly.

Question Three: “Do you agree with the following statement? “There are differences between the ministry of men and the ministry of women.” Give your answer in the line below.” Six participants answered correctly on this question, which makes it forty-six percent of the participants who responded correctly.

Question Four: “Do you agree with the following statement? “I will never accept a woman to be a minister in my church.” Give your answer in the line below.” Twelve participants answered correctly on this question, which makes it ninety-two percent of the participants who responded correctly.

Question Five: “Do you agree with the following statement? “Having a women minister at my church does not bother me at all.” Give your answer in the line below.”

All participants answered correctly on this question, which means one hundred percent of the participants responded correctly.

Questionnaire Summary

Although there were twenty participants present, there were thirteen forms submitted. It appears that seven participants chose not to complete a survey or forgot to hit submit. The first question requested participants to select their age range. Zero responded for eighteen to twenty-five; two responded for twenty-five to thirty-five; four responded for thirty-five to forty-five; ten responded for forty-five to fifty-five; four responded for fifty-five to sixty-five; and zero responded for sixty-five plus. The results indicate seventy percent of the participants were forty-five years and older.

The second question requested participants to select their race. Ten responded to African American, zero responded to Asian, ten responded to Indian, and zero responded to Latino/Hispanic. The results indicate fifty percent of the participants were African American and fifty percent were Indian.

The third question requested participants to select their level of education. Zero responded to not graduating from school; zero responded to GED; one responded to high school diploma; zero responded to some college; and seven responded to college graduate. All responded that they are graduate students. The results indicate one hundred percent of the participants had a master’s degree or were graduate students.

Post-Survey Summary

Although there were twenty participants present, there were nine forms submitted for the post-survey. It appears that eleven participants did not complete a form or forgot to hit submit. I made sure that every participant received the survey. There were seven questions on the post-survey. The survey questions were in short paragraph essay questions. The aim of the post-survey was to find how much the participants understood the lessons that were given during the workshop. The following statement was written at the top of the survey: "Please give your opinions on the following statements in the small comment box."

Statement One: "I learned from Romans 16:1–7 that there have been women ministers during the first church." Ninety-two percent of the participants responded correctly to this question.

Statement Two: "The ministry of the women found in Romans 16:1–7, is not to be considered full-time ministry." Ninety-five percent of the participants responded correctly to this question.

Statement Three: "Apostle Paul did accept women in ministry if we look at the Book of Romans 16:1–7." Eighty-nine percent of the participants answered this question correctly.

Statement Four: "The issue about women in ministry can't be solved in this generation." Ninety-two percent of the participants responded correctly to this question.

Statement Five: "The issue about women in ministry will only be solved when a new way of thinking (philosophy) will come." Ninety-two percent of the participants responded correctly to this question.

Statement Six: “The Bible does not say a single word concerning the role of women in ministry.” Sixty-six percent of the participants responded correctly to this question.

Statement Seven: “A new philosophy (way of thinking) is the bridge that will unite those who don't agree on the role of women in ministry.” Fifty-five percent of the participants responded correctly to this question.

Participants' Feelings Summary

As I have mentioned the pre- and post-survey questions were in a short paragraph essay question. The essay answers of the survey revealed several feelings that were expressed in different ways. These feeling are portrayed by no, yes, maybe, I'm positive, and I don't know. The words yes, maybe, and I'm positive are the words mostly used by the participants in their answers. The use of these words suggests that the majority of the participants are willing to accept women in ministry. This is a good indication from the pre- and post-survey. When I started this project back in 2019, and before starting the workshop I approached several people from my church and asked them their position about the integration of women in ministry. The answer was a straight no. I am surprised that now most people who participated in this workshop feel that women should be integrated in ministry. Even my church pastor, who is a conservative Seventh-day Adventist, also feels that women should be integrated in ministry after attending this workshop.

Conclusion

The ministry project went really well. The project proposal timeline and specific tasks assisted with planning, developing, and implementing the workshop. The professional associates and contextual associates were exceedingly devoted and compassionate of the ministry project, and everybody staunchly assisted programmed reunions. The persistent encouragement and meetings and feedback with Dr. Francis and Dr. Sharon Ellis-Davis were helpful.

I hoped to have had more participants from other races such as Latino/Hispanic, White Caucasian, and Asian (Korean, Japanese), which would have made the workshop more international since I am dealing with a worldwide church in this project. If the workshop flyer was posted in the community and the workshop was held in-person at a location within the community, there probably would be greater representation from the immediate community.

My hypothesis is: If women in leadership (ministry) are provided with a workshop that brings awareness by offering a biblical and theological foundation then they will be empowered in their leadership, which will create avenues for them to articulate their beliefs, will equip them with information, strengthen them in their faith, and empower them to articulate that faith to themselves and others. Having the opportunity to share in the workshop and gaining knowledge is the beginning of their ability to articulate that faith to others. Based upon the post-survey results, participants' feeling summary, participant comments, level of transparency from the participants and speakers, as well as the post-workshop individual participants' feedback during the

workshop interviews, the workshop can be considered a success. I can say that the Holy Spirit brought all the speakers to one accord as if they had planned it this way.

Self-Transformation

I discovered lots of information about the role of women in ministry while doing this project. This information changed and shaped my view about the role of women in ministry. It is not easy to come up with straight answer that will give a definition to what should be the role of women in ministry because of two contradicting interpretations of the Bible. These interpretations are a) biblical interpretation or biblical philosophy, b) historical interpretation or historical philosophy.

In this project these two interpretations are the biblical foundation and the historical foundation. The biblical foundation/biblical philosophy does not give room for women to be in ministry. Biblical philosophy bases its position from the biblical text and on the contrary the historical foundation/historical philosophy seems to give room for women in ministry and it bases its position by pointing at the culture and the context on which the Bible was written. Out of these two interpretations stands Jesus who seems to be neutral but saws compassion to women. To have an equitable balance from a human understanding on this subject biblical philosophy and historical philosophy must find a point of agreement and a bridge. The point of agreement is Jesus because Jesus is beyond biblical philosophy and historical philosophy.

For me, since Jesus had compassion on women, had a neutral position, and did not discourage women to participate in ministry, we should do the same. If there are women who are in ministry, we should not discourage them and we should have

compassion to them. Another view that will support this idea is the position of Apostle Paul regarding women in ministry. Jesus' ministry is also fulfilled in the ministry of Apostle Paul. We saw in the biblical and historical foundation that Roman 16:1-7 indicates that Apostle Paul did mention Phoebe, a woman, as a deacon of the church in Cenchrea. As I have mention in the biblical foundation, Apostle Paul obviously viewed Phoebe as more than simply a helper. In fact, Paul uses the same word (diakonos) to refer to other ministers and leaders in a congregation, including himself. From these and many other writings, clearly Paul advocated for women in ministry. Contrary to the social order of the day, he frequently recognized the Spirit-inspired work that many women shared as fellow laborers.

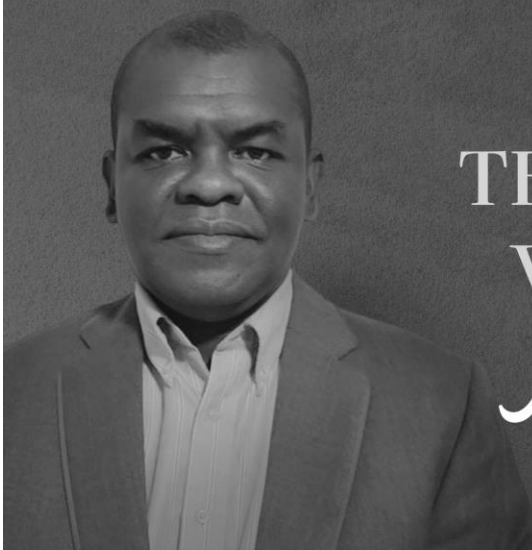
I can conclude that women have a place and a position in ministry. If today a woman is used by God to do a ministry, this can be like a leadership position like the role that Phoebe played or like the evangelist position that Priscila held. We should not interfere with that ministry. We are not the one to decide if its correct or incorrect, that is between God and the person.

APPENDIX A
WORKSHOP FLYER

MALAGASY SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH OF BERRIEN SPRINGS MICHIGAN

FIANGOANANA ADVENTISTE MALAGASY ETO BERRIEN SPRINGS MICHIGAN

PRESENTS A DOCTORAL WORKSHOP PROJECT ON
DINIDINIKA AMIN'NY SEHATRA DOKOTORALY



PR ANDRIANIRINA
TIANDRAY MBANONA

THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN *Ministry*

OCTOBER 16 & 23

NOVEMBER 6 & 13

NY SABATA FAHA 13 NY VOLANA NOVAMBRA 2021.

TIME : MANOMBOKA AMIN'NY 10AM - 6 PM

PLEASE COME TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN MINISTRY

TONGAVA MARO HIARAKA HANDINIKA NY TOERAN'NY VEHIVAVY EO AMIN'NY ASA FANOMPOANA.

PRESENTERS



PR. ANDRIAMPARANY
RABELOHATAONA



PR. BINA
HERIVONJY



ELDER AZARIAH
FANIVANA



PR. RASOANAIVO
LAHINITSOA

APPENDIX B

AGENDA

Week One:

- A. Pre-Surveys Fifteen Minutes
- B. Sabbath school based on the role of women in ministry from 8:00 a.m. - 10:15 a.m.
- C. Bible games about the role of women in ministry will be played during sabbath school.
- D. Present a sermon on “The role of women in ministry” (Rom. 16:1-7), on Sabbath Morning. One hour followed by interactive question from the participants.
- E. Potluck fellowship.

Sabbath Afternoon:

- F. Present workshop on the types of ministries of the women in the Book of Romans 16:1-7. Is the type of ministries that the women in Romans 16:1-7 the same as the ministry that is performed by a full-time minister in today’s context? (Two hours. Ten minutes break).
- G. Lead a discussion with the participants about the types of ministries that the women in the Book of Romans 16:7 were doing. (One hour).
- H. Listen to the response from the participants about their points of view regarding the types of ministries that the women in the Book of Romans 16:7 were doing in relation with the discussions and the workshop and the sermon that I preached and presented at the beginning. (One hour and thirty minutes).
- I. Lead a discussion from a historical point of view with participants about the kinds of ministries the women in the Book of Romans 16:7 was doing.

Week Two - Workshop Continues:

- A. Gather the basic ideas that came from the participants about the types of ministries that women in the Book of Romans 16 were doing. This will be done with the participants. (One hour).
- B. Sabbath school based on the role of women in ministry from 8:00 a.m. - 10:15 a.m.
- C. Bible games about the role of women in ministry will be played during Sabbath school.
- D. Do an evaluation of the different points of view that came from the participants. This will be done with the participants. (One hour, ten minutes break).
- E. Present to the congregation my findings about the ministry that the women in the Book of Romans 16: 1-7 were doing, from an exegetical point of view were Biblical, Historical and Theological aspect of Romans 16:1-7 will be presented deeply. (Two hours).
- F. Listen to responses about my presentation from the participants. (Thirty minutes).

Sabbath Afternoon:

- G. Present workshop about challenges between the historical and biblical interpretations of Romans 16:1–7.

Week Three - Workshop Continues:

- A. This session was the most difficult session because I addressed the issue of Ellen G. White and the role of women in ministry. Ellen G. White was a prophetess and one of the pioneers of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. As I have already mentioned, Ellen G. White believed that women should take part in full-time ministry. Her statement about the role of women in ministry are highly respected in the Seventh-day Adventist Church.
- B. Sabbath school-based Ellen G White's position about the role of women in ministry from 8:00 a.m. - 10:15 a.m.
- C. A small movie on the life of Ellen G. White was played at the church. In that movie, there is a segment in which Ellen G. White is actually seen as a leader of the church. Pastors and church leaders came to her to seek advice on how the church should be handled.
- D. I (Ps Andrianirina Tiandray Mbanona) presented the third sermon of the workshop, which was based on the history of women in ministry in the Seventh-day Adventist Church and the writings of Ellen G. White.

Sabbath Afternoon:

- E. Presentation about how we should apply the writing of Ellen G. White in our days. The main point was that what Ellen G. White thought about women's ordination/the role of women in ministry was of her time. She herself rejected ordination, but God used her and did a mighty work for God. Ordination comes from God, and ministry is designed by God.

- F. Open sharing of thoughts and views about the presentations or the sermon that had been presented that day.
- G. Discussions and answers on the views and thoughts that were shared.

Week Four - Workshop Continues:

- A. The floor was open to anyone who wanted to share their experiences about what they had learned during the workshop.
- B. Sabbath school entitled “Women Victorious in Christ” started at 9:00 a.m. and ended at 10:15 a.m.
- C. A choir sung a special song.
- D. Bible riddles followed the song.
- E. A Sermon entitled “Women for Christ Ministry.” This sermon consisted of words of exhortation and encouragement to women to take part in ministry.

Sabbath Afternoon.

- F. This session is an open floor session, everyone who wanted to participate in doing something such as a Bible game, share testimonies, sing a song, present a poem to come up and present what he or she wanted to present.
- G. I preached a small sermon about the importance of women in ministry in the sight of God.

APPENDIX C
GROUND RULES

1. Please come on time.
2. You may use your first name or on the registration.
3. Please be respectful of one another.
4. Please keep all information shared confidential.
5. Please only share your own experiences.
6. Please type all your questions in the Chat Box AND make sure the message is sent to the host privately.
7. Please don't use other devices during the workshop.
8. Please return from breaks and lunch promptly.
9. If you need to contact me immediately, please call (937) 312-7911.

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